

# Southeast Asia Program at Cornell University

Fall Bulletin 2016



Cornell University



## INSIDE

### features

- 6 In Memoriam—Benedict Anderson
- 12 Cultivating Progress: Coffee As a Tool for Smallholder Development in Myanmar by Amy VanNocker
- 17 Walking Together: A Teaching Metaphor from Myanmar by Bryan Duff
- 21 Writing Regional and National Histories of Southeast Asia: Potentialities and Problems by Barbara Watson Andaya and Leonard Y. Andaya
- 27 Knowing History, Knowing Self: The Beginnings of Voices on Vietnam by Yen Vu

### columns

- 29 Southeast Asian Language Week Celebrates Language and Culture from the Region by Stefanie Tanaka
- 31 SEAP Publications
- 32 The Echols Collection: Priceless Pamphlets by Phi Vân Nguyen
- 34 SEAP Outreach Announces Newly Digitized Lending Library by Jenna Bittenbender

### news

- 36 Announcements
- 38 Cultures of Censorship in Thailand by Rebecca Townsend
- 39 New Courses
- 40 Upcoming Events
- 41 Awards
- 42 SEAP Faculty 2016-2017
- 43 New Johnson Museum Acquisitions

## ABOUT THE COVERS

*Kayon* ("tree") or *gunungan* ("mountain") is a leaf-shaped shadow puppet of intricately tooled leather supported by a rod carved from buffalo horn. Made in the twentieth century in central Java, this puppet represents the "tree of life" as the axis of the universe that connects the earthly world with that of the spirits. Typically, the *kayon*'s outline suggests a sharply pointed mountain (*Meru*) and within its confines the principal perforated and painted figure is a tree, entwined with a serpent, and crowned with the flaming head of the god *Kala*, symbolic of time. Birds, monkeys, and other creatures cavort in the spreading branches, while the base of the tree is often flanked by tigers, elephants, or spirited bulls whose horns point, somewhat ironically, to the very substance enforcing the puppet's spine. Out of this materially charged dance of hide and horn, the tree's roots often emerge from a pool of water set on a winged stone temple, its twin doors guarded by ferocious armed gatekeepers wielding clubs.

This innovative *kayon* (see front cover), however, departs dramatically from the expected imagery. Acquired for the Herbert F. Johnson Museum from the collection of Joseph Fischer through the George and Mary Rockwell Fund (gift of the Louise Taraldson Woods Estate, by exchange 2008.073.182), this spreading tree is oddly devoid of all life save the architecturally enlivened element of two open-beaked garuda birds whose razor-sharp teeth enclose a blue, multi-tiered clock tower. The clock face, inspired perhaps by a Dutch prototype, eclipses what once was the bulging eyes, and lolling tongue, of *Kala*. The play of time is transformed irrevocably.

Why did the puppet maker choose to stop the hands of time punctually at twenty minutes past nine? We will probably never know. What we do know, however, is that in the course of any shadow play, the *kayon*'s role is in part that of timekeeper, returning again and again not only to punctuate the performance, but to change the scenery as well. If, for example, there is an ominous commotion in nature (*gara-gara*), then the *kayon* magically reappears to signal that the cosmic order is being threatened. When called upon, the *kayon*'s shadow can flutter wildly across the screen, hovering horizontally to become a rising river, exceeding its banks, or, turned red side out and vertically poised (see back cover), its incendiary force can bring viewers to the fiery gates of hell itself. Combining earth, water, fire, wind, and ether, the repeated dance of the *kayon* twirling through space sets elemental forces at play, both creatively and destructively. In the words of Claire Holt "immobile and mysterious, like an oracle, it occupies the center of the screen before a performance begins. It appears there again between the play's major periods, and finally at the conclusion of the show... 'Tantjeb kayon'—'implant the kayon'—is the equivalent of *finis*, at the termination of every shadow-play script."

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Stills from the "Shadow Ballads" performance.

# TELLING TIME WITH SHADOWS

## LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

LEARNING AS WE GO (*"belajar sambil jalan"*) has certainly been the order of the day since December 13, 2015, when we received the tragic news that Professor Emeritus Benedict Anderson (1936–2015) had passed away in East Java. I had just participated in a roundtable entitled "Asia on the Rise" for Kyoto University's Consortium for Southeast Asian Studies in Asia and was reconnecting with friends and colleagues Barbara and Leonard Andaya (whose Golay lecture appears in this bulletin), and Jeff Hadler, when we received the urgent message. Like the *kayon* on the cover, my first instinct was to "stop the clocks;" but Barbara wisely countered, "You'll have your work cut out for you when you get back to Ithaca." And, of course, she was right, but in a more profound way than either of us could have fully anticipated.

As director of the Southeast Asia Program, I have been moved ever since by the outpouring of tributes and remembrances received from around the world. On January 31, 2016, many of us met at Sage Chapel to honor Ben and to celebrate what was described in the program as "his completed life." I am grateful to everyone—faculty, staff, students, and friends—who came together to plan a fitting tribute for such a remarkable human being. And yet, upon further reflection, there is nothing "completed" about his life. His presence continues to be felt, not only through careful re-readings of his work, but through hands-on teaching with objects collected during his years in Indonesia and generously gifted to the Herbert F. Johnson Museum.

He would have reveled in "Shadow Ballads," a performance organized by SEAP faculty member and senior lecturer in the Department of Music Christopher Miller. In Barnes Hall auditorium, on April 24, 2016, a multimedia collaboration combining Appalachian "crankies" with Bali-

nese shadow puppets, and American old-time music with its Indonesian equivalent, *kroncong*, was performed to a full house by a group of nine guest artists from the U.S. and Indonesia. Funded in part by a grant from the Cornell Council for the Arts, "Shadow Ballads" brought Ben's love and concern for *wayang beber* creatively into the 21st century. When Gusti Sudarta, Balinese master puppeteer and professor at the Indonesian Institute of the Arts in Denpasar, performed together with friends his rendition of "The Theft of Sita" based on the Ramayana, the audience was spellbound. Drawing on age-old Hindu-Buddhist themes of the body of the goddess as the surrounding landscape, Sudarta's preliminary dance of the blossoming "tree of life" (*kayon*) twirling through space to be inserted into the frame could not have prepared us fully for the loss of biodiversity and deforestation as "theft" that awaited us at shadow's end. And yet, the clowns kept us laughing with their cell phones and their flatulence.

This enriching integration of humanities and sciences resonated as well this past spring in "Conservation for One Health," a new project funded by Engaged Cornell with additional support from SEAP and the Jane Goodall Institute. College of Veterinary Medicine researcher Robin Radcliffe was largely the mastermind of this interdisciplinary course, which is grounded in teaching as it intersects with research. Robin began his affiliation with SEAP through a bilingual children's book, "The Hornless Rhinoceros," to raise awareness of the endangered plight of Javan and Sumatran rhinoceroses. SEAP's Indonesian language instructor, Jolanda Pandin, provided the seamless translation. Pandin's and my guest lectures helped to add a key interdisciplinary component and broader SEAP involvement in the project, in turn expanding the breadth of program connections across campus.

Kaja M. McGowan,  
associate professor,  
history of art, director,  
Southeast Asia Program





I want to congratulate our 2016 recipients of the Internationalizing the Cornell Curriculum (ICC) grants. Of the twelve, I am proud to relate that three have SEAP faculty and affiliate involvement.

#### 2016 INTERNATIONALIZING THE CORNELL CURRICULUM (ICC) GRANT RECIPIENTS

**Christopher Miller**, Department of Music  
"Music in and of Contemporary East Asia"

**Thúy Tranviet**, Vietnamese language lecturer in Asian Studies, and **Michael Hoffmann**, Cornell Institute for Climate Change and Agriculture, Department of Entomology  
"Climate-Change Awareness and Service-Learning in the Mekong Delta"

**Shorna Allred**, Department of Natural Resources, and **Amy Kuo Somchanhmavong**, Public Service Center  
"Global Citizenship and Sustainability: Service-Learning and Community-Based Research in Borneo"

I am also pleased to report that the Myanmar Initiative is thriving, forging new opportunities that would be impossible without crucial assistance from the NRC grant and the Mario Einaudi Center for International Studies. I am grateful to Hirokazu Miyazaki, director of the Einaudi Center, for his continued support. Internationalization funds from Einaudi for 2015 made it possible for professors Bryan Duff, Chiara Formichi, Andrew Mertha, and me to travel to Burma. One outcome has been a new ICC course co-taught by Bryan Duff and me this past spring, "Crossing Borders in Education: The Case of Myanmar" (EDUC 4940/ASIAN 4495). Through initial contacts with professors at Yangon's University of Education, and especially thanks to the gracious assistance of Professor Aye Aye Cho, SEAP was able to pilot its first pen-pal exchange between Cornell students and their Yangon counterparts. (For more on these developments, see Duff's and Cho's essays in this bulletin).

We were not only able to invite Cho to Cornell, but Professor Marie Lall from London, and two world-renowned Burmese contemporary artists, Nge Lay and Aung Ko, along with a number of other guest speakers. Lall's research indicates that there is a direct link between conflict and how people feel about what language and curriculum their children are taught. There is evidence that Mother Tongue Based teaching encourages students to connect with their surroundings in a way that forges more environmentally responsible relationships to the land. Introducing eco-tourism into the curriculum, according to Cho, will allow students to develop a sensitivity toward local cultures and biodiversity. Her vision engages with that of contemporary artists Lay and Ko and their ongoing Thuyedan Rural Village Art Project. What emerged from the course, "Crossing Borders in Education," was the need for future focus on language, art, and ecotourism in relation to implementing education reforms in Burma,

especially the bridge-building role that contemporary Burmese artists can play through their critical on-site installation work in rural areas.

The arrival in January of Professor Chotima Chaturawong as a visiting fellow from Silpakorn University energized the Myanmar Initiative in new and unexpected ways as well. An expert on Burmese Buddhist architecture, Chaturawong not only attended and contributed to the Burma/Myanmar Seminar, organized and taught by Professor Magnus Fiskesjö, but she provided a Gatty Series lecture and an overview of her ongoing research on Burmese monastic architecture in EDUC4940/ASIAN 4495.

As one of two universities in the United States offering Burmese language instruction at all levels, Cornell is in a good position to influence the future of Burmese language pedagogy. Burmese language instructor Yu Yu Khaing has clearly brought a new energy to the program. Within weeks of her arrival in August 2015, she was contacted by SEAP's new partners in the Law School, the Education Minor, and even community organizations seeking assistance with Burmese. She gave lectures in both Myanmar-focused classes, and her network of former students and contacts in Burma Studies circles has already proved to be an asset for SEAP and Cornell. As a result of this synergy, a Burmese Language Pedagogy Workshop is planned for fall 2016. The workshop promises to bring together experts in Burmese linguistics and language teaching to share their latest research and/or curriculum development projects.

In all things Myanmar related, I would like to thank our associate director, Thamora Fishel, whose overarching vision for this programming has been invaluable. Her foresight has helped give Cornell a strong initial foothold in Myanmar, positioning SEAP in her own words "as the hub of a many-spoked wheel of Myanmar-related activities across the entire campus."

The Cornell in Cambodia Program continues to shine as an example of a credit-bearing winter session study abroad opportunity. Its success is largely due to the original vision of Professor Andy Mertha, Department of Government, who has helped SEAP build an enduring partnership with the Center for Khmer Studies (CKS). CKS facilitates all in-country logistics and hosts the program. SEAP's New Initiatives Coordinator, Jessica Snyder, was instrumental in assisting with the logistics of this course, helping to tap outreach connections to community colleges to serve as a bridge between CKS and Tompkins Cortland Community College. A new CU in Cambodia course, scheduled for winter 2017 and entitled "Performing Angkor: Dance, Silk, and Stone," will link architecture, performing arts (dance), and textiles. Congratulations are in order for Jessica as she accepts a new job in Denver. We will miss her! Welcome to Jenna Bittenbender, who has accepted the post starting in August.

A highlight of every week here at Cornell is the Ronald and Janette Gatty Series, which is organized by our graduate students. The co-chairs for 2015-16 were Alexandra Dalferro and Chairat Polmuk. As a result of their leadership, we celebrated the annual graduate student conference "(Re)Creating



Currents in Southeast Asia" in March. In April 2016, Professor Tamara Loos and PhD candidate and presenter Rebecca Townsend organized an international workshop hosted by SEAP called "Cultures of Censorship: Censorship and Secrets in Thailand." Also presenting were David Streckfuss, independent scholar, and Thaweepon Kummetha, an editor with the independent web news outlet *Prachatai English*. Both conferences succeeded in bringing graduate students' voices into enriching dialogue with more senior scholars.

The Annual SEAP Banquet in April was a great success, revealing hidden talent and satiating our desire for the old classics. In that regard, special thanks go to Professor Emeritus Thak Chaloemtiarana, who soothed our weary souls with his timeless rendition of a famous ASEAN love song. Hosted by the new graduate co-chairs for 2016–2017, Van Tran and Fauzul Rizal Sutikno, the evening was memorable.

SEAP has continued to build partnerships with academic institutions in Asia. Strengthening its ties with the Center for Southeast Asian Studies (CSEAS) at Kyoto University, SEAP hosted a visit by CSEAS Director Yasuyuki Kono that coincided with the 2015 Burma/Myanmar Forum. His closing remarks drew attention to the comparative research in Japan being done on Myanmar.

Our outreach coordinator, Brenna Fitzgerald, continues to forge exciting opportunities for collaboration. This November SEAP Outreach, in collaboration with the Cornell-Syracuse South Asia Consortium and a number of regional community colleges, will hold a conference called "Internationalization and Inclusion: Refugees in Community Colleges." The conference aims to facilitate collaboration between community colleges, refugee service organizations, and refugee communities in the region.

And finally, a third Cornell Modern Indonesia Project (CMIP) Conference is scheduled for spring 2017 to auspiciously coincide with the fiftieth anniversary of Claire Holt's magnum opus, *Art in Indonesia: Continuities and Change*. Published in 1967 by Cornell University Press (CUP), Holt's classic text will set the tenor of the conference/volume, entitled "Still in the Game: The State of Indonesian Art History in the 21st Century," which promises to bring renowned scholars together from Indonesia, Australia, and Europe. A traveling exhibition of contemporary Indonesian photography at the Herbert F. Johnson Museum, curated by SEAP Visiting Fellow, Brian Arnold, will further enhance the programming. An exhibition of Ben Anderson's mask collection and Claire Holt's shadow puppets will also honor the occasion.

It is fitting that this conference and the accompanying volume, *Art in Indonesia*, will mark the initiation of SEAP Publications' contract to merge collaboratively with CUP. SEAP Publications has long promoted the publication of high quality scholarship on Southeast Asia through the journal, *Indonesia*, and its book publications. To position this scholarship more prominently, SEAP Publications became an official imprint of Cornell University Press on August 1, 2016. Please



Professor Kaja McGowan with SEAP graduate students Alexandra Dalferro (left) and Anissa Rahadiningtyas (right) explore the streets of Kyoto while attending Kyoto University's Consortium for Southeast Asian Studies in December 2015.

stay tuned for a forthcoming press release and contact SEAP Publications if you have a manuscript you would like us to consider in this new venture!

As we stopped to celebrate the ninetieth birthday of Professor Emeritus Stanley J. O'Connor in the Kahin Center on June 18, 2016, I found myself feeling continually grateful and proud to be part of the thriving community, both real and imagined, of friends and scholars that is SEAP. As family, colleagues, and former students of Stan gathered to salute our illustrious nonagenarian (including out-of-town guests such as Nora Taylor, Caverlee Cary, Pat Chirapravati, and Toni Shapiro-Phim, as well as written messages from Astri Wright in Norway and Apinan Poshyananda in the Czech Republic), I realized that we are all "learning as we go"—*belajar sambil jalan*, which in Indonesian implies the same metaphor of "walking together" as divined by my colleague Bryan Duff on his journey to Myanmar. Perhaps it was that second glass of wine, but I distinctly felt the twirling dance of the *kayon* ("tree of life") being planted—*tantjeb kayon*—in "horizontal comradeship," (to borrow Ben's own words in *Imagined Communities*)<sup>1</sup>, a joyous gathering of diverse nationalities and religious persuasions, of young and old alike...all gliding endlessly with hearts beating toward a limitless clock-ticking future.

*Kaja M. McGowan*

<sup>1</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991), 7.





Anderson's refusal to be  
hemmed in by professional identity  
is an inspiration...

BENEDICT  
RICHARD O'GORMAN  
ANDERSON



In Memoriam  
1936-2015



...and reminder of the creative insights that come from a willingness to learn across social, intellectual, and political boundaries.

by Gretchen Ritter, dean of arts and sciences and professor of government

WHEN I WAS A STUDENT at Cornell back in the early 1980s, Ben Anderson looked the part of the Cornell professor. He was a bit ruffled, with hair that seemed as though it had been repeatedly raked through by his fingers. Whenever and wherever you saw him on campus, he had a book in one hand and a small cigar in the other. It often appeared as though he was lost in thought. At the time he had a reputation as that really smart guy who read and talked about everything in his classes. He ran the gamut when it came to intellectual companionship—intersecting as much with anthropologists, historians, literary theorists, and economists as he did with his colleagues in the Government Department. On the eve of the publication of *Imagined Communities*, Ben Anderson was seen as the slightly less famous brother of Perry Anderson, the well-known British historian, who was one of the editors of the *New Left Review*. That changed, of course, with the publication of *Imagined Communities* in 1983.

There are two things that I admire deeply about Ben Anderson's career. One was his utter disregard for disciplinary and sub-disciplinary boundaries. Anderson wrote his dissertation at Cornell under the direction of Professor George Kahin. Like Kahin, Anderson was often mistaken for a historian rather than a political scientist. Learning from a range of seemingly disparate sources and questioning commonsense wisdom about politics and culture was Anderson's trademark. His first book was inspired by a passing comment by Alan Bloom—then Anderson's senior colleague in the Government Department—that the Greeks had no concept of power. Anderson tells of running to the library to check the classical Greek dictionary and discovering that indeed there was no general concept of power there. It struck him that the same was true in classical Javanese culture. From this came Anderson's first book, *The Idea of Power in Javanese Culture*.

Anderson was deeply influenced by colleagues and graduate students in the Southeast Asia Studies Program at Cornell, who came from a wide range of departments. Reflecting on this period, he wrote joyfully about teaching with James Siegel, a professor of anthropology (and student of Clifford Geertz) with whom he taught a graduate seminar on Indonesian fiction. From this, he wrote: "I began to think about how I could use my early training in classical and Western




European, as well as Indonesian, literature for a new kind of analysis of the relations between imagination and reality in the study of politics." On this campus, in that interdisciplinary space, the seed of what became *Imagined Communities* was born.

At a time when there seems to be a great devotion to disciplinarity and even larger disciplinary categories, such as humanities and social science, Anderson's refusal to be hemmed in by professional identity is an inspiration and reminder of the creative insights that come from a willingness to learn across social, intellectual, and political boundaries.

The other thing I admire about Anderson's career was his willingness to bring a political and ethical perspective to his work. He believed that politics and scholarship were inseparable. Along with Ruth McVey, Anderson penned the famous "Cornell Paper" chronicling the mass murder of Communist Party members in Indonesia following the coup of 1965.<sup>1</sup> He also served as one of only two foreign witnesses to the trial



of the Communist Party secretary in 1971 and later translated the secretary's testimony into English. As a result of all of this, Anderson was banned from Indonesia and was only able to return after the fall of the Suharto regime in 1998. As one of my classmates from the early '80s said in a message to me, Anderson "exemplified the values of courage and speaking the truth even when powerful government forces fought to suppress that truth."

As someone who stood up against government power, who challenged received categories and wisdoms, and who offered insightful ways of understanding some of our most important political categories, such as nationalism, Ben Anderson will continue to serve as a model and inspiration to us all. 



Ben did not dictate or interfere with your scholarship or ideas...

he simply set you up, pushed you forward, and said...

explore.

by Tamara Loos, associate professor of history and Asian studies

IN THE WAKE OF BEN'S PASSING, I have heard many of us express deep, abiding respect for him and a profound sense of loss. I have also learned through these conversations, that few felt close to Ben or knew how Ben felt about us.

Ben was formal, maybe not in the way he dressed, but in his interpersonal relationships. He would never express directly his care for you or his praise. But I've been thinking about this: Here he was, a world-renowned scholar who could have taught anywhere, lived anywhere. He travelled to Jakarta or Bangkok or Manila and would return again and again to Freeville, to the Southeast Asia Program, and to us, his community, his family. He was devoted to us here and committed to our work on Southeast Asia. Ben expressed his affection and his respect in this and many other meaningful ways.


Ben helped establish the journal *Indonesia* in 1966. In 2008, when Ben and Jim Siegel decided to retire from the journal's editorship, they selected Professors Eric Tagliacozzo and Josh Barker to replace them. Did Ben say to Eric and Josh: "Good job! We think you're the best scholars imaginable to edit this journal for all the amazing scholarship you've written about Indonesia!" No. Ben was complex socially and interpersonally. He revealed he cared in many other ways, though. Like asking Eric and Josh to shepherd his literal brainchild.

Ben's friendship was expressed in many uncommon ways, and his mentorship was freeing. Ben did not dictate or inter-

fere with your scholarship or ideas—he didn't need to mark it, to make it his, even when the projects (like an essay about his life as it related to his scholarship on Thailand, or his baby, the journal *Indonesia*) were of profound personal significance to him. Instead he simply set you up, pushed your forward, and said *explore*.

Exploring is something Ben did in his life with gusto. Ben expressed this in an email he wrote in 2012 in response to my description of a torrential thunderstorm whipping past me in my high-rise Bangkok apartment. His response:

"I envy you—I really love the *rydu fon* [Thai: "rainy season"] seen from 9 floors up, flash lightning, exhilarating downpours. I have fond memories of *rydu fon* in Jakarta in the early '60s. In the slums, like energetic young cockroaches, the kids would pour out of their hovels, all stark naked, including even little girls, loving the warm rain, the freshened air, and looking for a few pennies from bourgeois cars stuck in small flooded streets—[the kids] pretending to help push these cars into drier places. It is what the French call *jouissance*. Mad ecstasy against the dull ruts of every day life."<sup>2</sup>

For Ben, a small bite out of life would not suffice. He experienced what life offered via *all* his senses, not just his intellect. Life was sensuous, textured, tactile, vibrant. 



by Isaac Kramnick, professor emeritus of government

I RISE TO SAY A FEW WORDS about the incomparable Ben Anderson—a colossally influential and courageous scholar—and his membership in one particular imagined community, one within which he spent some 40 years: the Cornell Government Department.

Ben came to Ithaca as a graduate student in the early 1960s, and in 1967 began his teaching career in the Government

Department, which he proceeded to work on with a pen throughout the meeting, smoking his small cigars or cigarettes as he quickly filled in the blanks....

...Like many communities, real or imagined, the Government Department had an identity crisis, which took place during Ben's years as an assistant professor in the late '60s... Government had to make a decision: Should it go to Uris



Department, never really to leave it until his retirement in 2002. He arrived in Ithaca and to the Government Department during the tumultuous years when Cornell was one of the national epicenters of campus anti-Vietnam War protest and civil rights activism.

When he joined the Government faculty some of his colleagues were the leading campus conservatives, such as Alan Bloom, Clinton Rossiter, and Walter Berns, who saw themselves defending the barricades of academic tradition, collegiate hierarchies, and law and order from the barbarous attacks of student radicals. The obvious political exception within the imagined community called the Government Department was George Kahin, Ben Anderson's mentor, a nationally renowned anti-Vietnam War activist who helped create the "teach-in" movement in the United States.

Ben Anderson was very much the disciple of George Kahin. Like Kahin, he combined meticulous scholarship with passionate political engagement...Anderson's essay refuting the official story of the September 30 Movement and the anti-Communist slaughter of almost a million people in Indonesia led to him, like George, being banned from that country from 1972 until the end of Suharto's dictatorship in 1998. But Anderson differed from Kahin in one very important respect. George was a consummate inside player, who was deeply interested in and involved with Government Department politics....

...Despite this, he almost always attended department meetings, though he seldom weighed in. Wearing always his Indonesian long white safari shirt, Ben sat at the meeting table invariably holding a copy of the *New York Times* open to

Hall with the social scientists or to McGraw Hall, where History was going?

Led by traditionalists like George Kahin, the Government Department, which had never imagined itself as a "political science" department, consulted its soul and voted to join History in McGraw Hall, where the two would be paired for more than 35 years. Government imagined itself not as

Ben Anderson was very much the disciple of George Kahin.

Like Kahin, he combined meticulous scholarship with passionate political engagement...

a quantitative social science community, but as institutionally and historically focused. That decision was made over many department meetings, with George Kahin arguing and persuading, and with Ben Anderson doing his crossword puzzles.

The decision not to go to Uris provided a congenial departmental home in which over thirty years Ben could produce his qualitative and historical scholarship, including of course in 1983 his magnum opus, *Imagined Communities*, which brought him international acclaim while shining a tiny spotlight on his home, the historically branded Government Department.

...It seems somehow fitting that Ben, a citizen of the world, died in Indonesia. But it also seems to me entirely appropriate to declare with great pride that the identity of this brilliant intellectual was bound up with Cornell's Government Department, a community that was, and remains, both imagined and real. *le*



### All Night Markets and Other Soundscapes Now Lost to Us

LINES FROM W.H. Auden's poem "Stop all the clocks, cut off the telephone...Pack up the moon and dismantle the sun" surfaced strangely in fits and starts in Japan on Sunday, December 13, when I heard the news of Ben's passing. I was with 500 other people at the inaugural Southeast Asian Studies in Asia Conference in Kyoto. The conference had assembled scholars from all ten ASEAN countries, plus Timor Leste, and fifteen other countries in the Asia-Pacific region and Europe. Among the participants were many friends and colleagues of Om Ben.

The conference immediately became a place of mourning, an impromptu wake, in the words of Jeff Hadler, a place where we grieved individually and together, comforted each

other, and celebrated Ben's life. We are/were, as Ben's former student Carol Hau described, "mere nodes in a larger network, as Ben's students have found jobs in—and in some cases headed—institutions of area studies and discipline-based fields around the world. That network also includes Ben's loved ones, colleagues, friends, and acquaintances from all walks of life, and parts of that network have already come together in the many memorials in

Surabaya, Bangkok, Manila, Jakarta, Ithaca, London, Berkeley, and other places that trace the wide arc of Ben's journeys across time and space."

We are never prepared for death, especially the loss of someone so vital to our Cornell community, a mentor, colleague, teacher, adversary, and friend. I want to thank you all, particularly those of you who have come to speak and to say prayers on Ben's behalf, and perhaps more dear and meaningful to Ben, those musicians, some of whom have traveled from as far as Middletown, Ct. Pak Marsam, who will be playing Ben's *gender*, and Bu Maeny, for braving the often unpredictable winter weather, and coming to today's memorial service at Sage Chapel.

As the director of the Southeast Asia Program, I cannot claim to be one of Ben's "chosen," but I can recall many conversations with him over the years, conversations that always entailed a specific line of questioning in which we covered everything from shadow puppets (like the flatulent, fun-loving Semar on the memorial program) to masks, ghosts to explicit hell scenes, East Javanese *candi* to *capung* (dragonflies), and especially the savory smells, tastes, and

Ben's irreverence for clocks, for clothing that constrained, and especially for the designated pathways at Cornell, always brought the theme song from the spaghetti western *The Good, The Bad and the Ugly* to mind. (I can hear it now!) I told him that once, and he laughed a deep belly laugh, a rich guttural soundscape strangely lost to us.

hustle bustle of night markets. Choice paintings by Balinese artist Ida Bagus Made, the life and work of Claire Holt, Knut Hamsun's novel *Hunger*, and of course, the novels and short stories of Indonesian writer Pramoedya Ananta Toer, all entered into the oddly imbalanced mix. Now I realize what tied them all together was a richly embodied relationship to the natural and built world that they inhabited filled with soundscapes, many now lost to us....

...I still see Om Ben gliding in this way, cutting across the Arts quad in his black-and-white poncho looking all the world like a version of Clint Eastwood—Ben's irreverence for clocks, for clothing that constrained, and especially for the designated pathways at Cornell, always brought the theme song from the spaghetti western *The Good, The Bad and the Ugly* to mind. (I can hear it now!) I told him that once, and he laughed a deep belly laugh, a rich guttural soundscape strangely lost to us. So now in the hustle and bustle of Sage, we come together to remember a remarkable man, and with eyes raised to the ceiling, where rivers of stars intersect at nave and apse, I close with "I See You're Here" (*Kulihat Kamu Ada Disini*) by the Indonesian poet, healer, and political activist Putu Oka Sukanta:

*If you are here tonight  
even though we know you are resting in the earth's embrace  
if you are here with us  
even though we know you've gone  
come, sit here with us  
as we plan out the path to dawn  
for we know your spirit is not dead  
we still feel the warmth of your embrace  
we still feel the beating of your heart  
Knocking  
Ticking tick tock tick tock tick tock tick!<sup>3</sup>*





by Ben Abel and Eveline Ferretti

### Pond Tales, Om Ben

FOR OVER 40 YEARS, Ben Anderson's home in the United States was an old farmhouse on a few acres in Freeville, N.Y., about 12 miles east of Cornell's campus. There, for two of those four decades, Ben was our neighbor and our dear friend. Our two sons, teenagers now, knew Ben Anderson as Om Ben—a large, round, white-haired, exquisitely quirky, and profoundly kind figure in their lives. He was for them the grandfather at the dinner table, unsparingly observant, prone to kooky questions and puzzling (and in their opinion, no doubt, tedious) intellectual riddles, decidedly unhip in his relationship to the trappings of American teenage modernity, yet always fantastically playful, always eager to spar with deliciously low-brow jokes and fake boxing maneuvers, and often surprisingly given to defending their youthful perspective against the interventions of dismayed parents who hoped to curb some of the breathtaking excesses of teenage self-centeredness.

For as long as we lived with him as a family, Ben spent only part of the year—the part that extended from warm summer into colorful fall—in Freeville. Yet the slow languor of countless summer and early fall evenings afforded us the opportunity of getting to know him from many angles. And one of the most revealing and precious of these was his love of the animals around his Freeville home. The wooded hills and wetlands of Pleasant Hollow harbor an abundance of wildlife. Ben was comfortable, even enthusiastic about most of it, but three particular animals stand out as Ben's favorites in this landscape. They were creatures he would look for especially eagerly each time he returned to Upstate New York in late spring. And really they say a great deal about the Ben we knew and loved.

The first was the blue heron. A frequent, silent visitor to the marshy pond on the downhill side of Ben's backyard during the summer months, the heron was much loved by Ben for its somewhat grouchy look, but also for its remarkable ability to stand stock-still, head bent over the pond's edge, for what seemed like hours. Of course, we know that herons behave this way because they have perfected the strategy of waiting patiently for an edible something to present itself and ever so skillfully snapping it up. But from Ben's own perch on his small second-floor porch, it was easy to imagine that long-legged visitor on the far side of the sagging dock as a being who had perfected the art of losing himself deeply in thought, waiting for that one breakthrough insight that made all that stillness, all that thinking, all that separation from cheap distractions, very, very worthwhile.

The second animal that Ben had particular fondness for during his summers at home was a more elusive character, presenting itself only occasionally after sunlight had faded from the evening sky, and then only by call. Nothing would put Ben in a better mood for the evening than the hoot of the barred owl making itself heard from the tall pines by the



back deck. We could never see that owl, of course. But when it called, the dinner conversation would come to a sudden stop, and all would peer rapturously up into the branches high above, each of us envisioning the look of that wide-eyed bird, watchfully peering around and over, scanning the night above and below, for what is and what moves.

Last, but by no means least, of the natives that Ben most loved in the forest-field-wetland habitat around his home was the dandy skunk. The two places of skunk hibernation that we discovered around Ben's house over the years ensured a frequent number of visits from these creatures over the spring, summer, and fall months. Ben was absolutely delighted when they came to call and was ready to defend their reputation fiercely, even as the rest of us proved far more skeptical and far less able to shake off our nervous unease in their presence. No doubt the skunk's magnificent attire—that gorgeous white mane against that jet-black base—explained at least some of Ben's admiration. Ultimately, however, it is also easy to believe that what drew Ben most to these handsome fellows was their strategy in face of untoward developments—their ability to deploy a non-lethal yet most effective strategy to persuade any oncoming menace to stop, re-evaluate the sense of its attack, and more likely than not, back off.

The blue heron, the barred owl, the skunk—all animals native to the Finger Lakes, and thanks to the years that we were able to spend with our peripatetic Om Ben, ones that will always remind us of him, of some of the values he held most dear, and of some of the most important lessons he gave us, both in word and by virtue of how he led his own life: The importance of taking the time to stop and think, of looking up and around, and, yes, when the situation calls for it, of having the courage and presence of mind to make a bit of a stink. *ala*

#### ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Frederick Bunnell helped both Ruth and Ben as they wrote this paper.

<sup>2</sup> Personal email, July 18, 2012.

<sup>3</sup> From "I See You're Here" (*Kulihat Kamu Ada Disini*), translated by Keith Foulcher, in *Surat Bunga Dari Ubud*, by Putu Oka Sukanta (edisi dua bahasa), (Penerbit Koekoesan, 2008), 128-131.



CULTIVATING PROGRESS

# Coffee As a Tool for Smallholder Development in Myanmar





by Amy VanNocker, MPS international  
agriculture and rural development, 2016



When I tell someone that I'm researching coffee production in Myanmar, there are usually two distinct pauses, as the person first locates the country on a mental map, and then finds a disparity when considering all the places more commonly identified as coffee origins. But the fact that Myanmar is not yet as well known as Colombia, Brazil, or even Vietnam in the coffee industry does not mean that the coffee produced there is insignificant or of low quality. In the highlands of Southern Shan State and the Mandalay region, estate growers and smallholder farmers alike have been making great strides to produce coffee that is impressing professional judges around the world. Myanmar as a whole is now the third-fastest-growing coffee producer in the world.<sup>1</sup>

In the summer of 2015, I had the privilege of partnering with Winrock International, a non-governmental organization headquartered in Arkansas and operating in more than forty countries around the world.<sup>2</sup> Their USAID-funded Value Chains for Rural Development (VC-RD) project is a five-year project begun in Myanmar in late 2014 that aims to improve the productivity and profitability of small farm systems. Coffee is not a major crop in Myanmar, a country more often remembered as the top rice exporter of the early 1960s, but it has been cultivated there in small amounts since the 1880s.<sup>3</sup> Since smallholder farmers cannot compete with more industrialized producers in terms of quantity, they often find a lucrative niche in the specialty coffee market, wherein discerning buyers pay pre-

mium prices for coffees designated as "specialty." As opposed to commodity-grade coffee, specialty coffee must meet strict quality standards, score at least 80 out of 100 points on the Specialty Coffee Association of America's (SCAA) grading scale, and possess some distinct positive characteristics usually attributed to variety, processing method, or cultivation environment.

Most of the global supply of specialty coffee is grown by farmers working less than two hectares of land, and the many smallholder agriculturalists of Myanmar's coffee regions are increasingly well-positioned to join that group.<sup>4</sup> Despite the existence of a Coffee Research Information and Education Technology Centre in the city of Pyin Oo Lwin—bolstered by funds from the Food and Agriculture Organi-

*Women from Mya Ze Di village sort coffee cherries and spread them on drying tables for natural processing.*





zation of the United Nations in 2003 but relatively neglected thereafter—Myanmar's governmental extension agents are able to provide minimal financial and technical support to smallholder coffee producers in their efforts to meet the quality demands of this specialty

market. Winrock International aims to bridge this gap as one way of improving economic livelihoods. My role last summer in Myanmar was to partner with local staff in an analysis of the existing coffee value chain, looking for weaknesses or bottlenecks where out-

side intervention could improve the industry. With growing involvement from private industry and development organizations, smallholder coffee farmers in Myanmar are now making connections with influential specialty coffee buyers.

Before coming to Cornell in 2014, I worked for nearly four years with smallholder farmers in Central America, East Africa, and Southeast Asia, usually on general food security issues, but occasionally on coffee production in particular. My undergraduate education in political science and development gave me a good foundation in the social sciences, but studying at Cornell has supplemented that with economics and plant science courses. In my final semester, I learned a lot about agricultural extension techniques as well as the microbiology of coffee fermentation. Furthermore, I benefitted greatly from a Foreign Language and Area Studies fellowship that allowed me to improve my fledgling grasp on the Burmese language. Given my interest in coffee and my particular affinity for



*Left: Farmers spread tea leaves for drying near Ywangan. In rural villages, coffee is often dried this way as well, on woven mats on the ground.*

*Below: A coffee variety from Kenya called SL34, grown by some of Pyin Oo Lwin's estate farmers.*







*A typical scene in the valley between Heho and Ywangan, where cultivated field crops dominate the landscape. Inset: CQI and Winrock staff pose outside of U Win Aung Kyaw's house after the first ToT (Training of Trainers) workshop with individuals who went on to lead agronomy and processing workshops for almost 1500 farmers throughout Ywangan Township.*

Southeast Asia, I jumped at the chance to be involved in one of the only international efforts to encourage coffee production in this emerging origin.

After a few days of acclimation and strategizing with Winrock staff in Yangon, I traveled to Southern Shan State to meet with Ma Su Lai May, a Winrock agronomist who would partner with me to interview various stakeholders in the Myanmar coffee industry. Though originally from the central dry zone, Ma Su Lai May had spent time in Shan State during her college days collecting plant pathogens for lab experiments from the famous floating tomato gardens of Inle Lake. We met at the small regional airport in Heho and drove three hours to the northwest, passing a few other vehicles, a few more water buffalo, and broad expanses of field crops.

Eventually arriving in the township of Ywangan, we checked into the only hotel licensed to host foreign guests like myself and walked down the road to meet with U Win Aung Kyaw, a leader of the loose affiliation of local coffee producers. The scrapbook he showed us would suggest that any foreigner who has passed through in the last twenty years and shown any inter-

est in Myanmar's coffee has visited U Win Aung Kyaw. In the year prior to my own visit, Winrock invited industry consultants to establish a baseline quality measure through sensory analyses called "cuppings." With the goal of determining the quality of a particular lot of coffee, trained and calibrated professionals "cup" each lot and assign a numerical score reflecting the coffee's body, acidity, balance, and flavor attributes. Armed with U Win Aung Kyaw's perspective on the current state of coffee production, and Winrock's baseline information about the current quality being produced in the region, Ma Su Lai May and I set off to complete a series of interviews.

Over the next few weeks, our conversations with smallholder growers, brokers, and estate owners helped us understand the current structure of the industry, wherein most coffee is processed for use in instant beverages or shipped into Yunnan to service China's growing demand for coffee. In the absence of buyers willing to pay a premium for improved quality, farmers and brokers alike have little incentive to harvest or process coffee cherries to high standards. Though some villages have access to a modified rice-hulling

machine or specialized coffee-pulping machine, many coffee producers expend amazing amounts of energy manually transforming their product from a fresh coffee cherry all the way down to a green bean.<sup>5</sup>

In Ywangan, this labor is performed almost exclusively by women, who stand at a large mortar and pestle, pounding the cherry flesh (and later, the parchment) loose from the delicate coffee beans inside. This post-harvest processing (wherein smallholders essentially absorb the cost of processing without receiving any premium for their labor) represents a major shortcoming in the value chain, and thus a good point of intervention for the VC-RD project to pursue.

Though USAID could have mobilized the finances quickly to secure machinery, this work was slowed by the more complicated task of importing the proper processing machinery from South America. Coffee harvest begins in this region of Myanmar each year in late December, and Winrock staff didn't have enough time to establish centralized washing stations and educate farmers on their use for the December 2015 harvest. Instead, Coffee Quality Institute consultants advised



that smallholders transition from the hand-pounding method to a technique known as “natural” or dry processing. Though washed coffees fetch slightly higher prices across all global markets, smallholders unable to access the machinery needed for the washing process can also achieve high scores on the SCAA scale through this less capital-intensive method wherein cherries are dried on simple raised beds, and the flesh and parchment are later removed in one single step by an actor further along the value chain. The natural processed coffees did not disappoint, and the industry consultants who were initially impressed with the potential of Myanmar’s coffee have been gradually won over by the coffees’ performance on the cupping table.

During Myanmar’s first quality competition held in early 2015, international professional judges determined


that only 21 of 58 coffee samples scored above the minimum standard of 80 points on the SCAA 100-point scale. Following workshops on coffee cultivation and processing led by consultants from the Coffee Quality Institute (CQI) and Winrock staff, those farmers greatly improved the quality of their coffees. Only a year later, 56 of 60 samples met the minimum qualifications for the specialty market. Seven of the top ten highest-ranking samples were products of natural processing.

In April 2016, I was able to join three of Myanmar’s estate growers in Atlanta, Georgia, at the annual SCAA Expo. As the world’s largest specialty coffee event, the expo brings together actors from the entire coffee value chain, from farmers to baristas. The three estate growers from Myanmar represented all the Burmese producers who sent samples for the expo. They stood proudly

as the CQI/Winrock team presented them to the crowd of baristas and coffee buyers who tested their coffees and spoke of flavor profiles that included hints of sugarcane and grapefruit.<sup>6</sup>

Craig Holt of Atlas Coffee Importers, an influential buyer and a board member of the CQI who was involved in the beginnings of this VC-RD project, has recently signed a purchase agreement for two containers (thirty-six tons) of Myanmar’s finest coffee. Rather than barely covering costs as before, farmers selling through this deal will now receive a social premium of around US\$1 per pound beyond their cost of production. This arrangement is only the first step in a longer effort toward establishing Myanmar as an origin of high-quality coffee and should translate into longer-term sustainability wherein farmers are able to invest in constant social and agricultural improvements that will keep buyers satisfied for many seasons to come.

In the remaining years of the VC-RD project, USAID intends to educate farmers in washed coffee processing techniques as well, giving them another option alongside the natural drying technique. As each processing method greatly influences final flavor profile, more post-harvest options will translate into a wider pool of buyers interested in varied profiles. Consumers can expect to sip their first cups of Myanmar’s specialty coffee in retail locations throughout the United States as early as August 2016.

By that time, I expect to be enjoying Myanmar’s coffee from the source again, as after graduation I will be joining the Myanmar Institute for Integrated Development (MIID) in their own agricultural projects in Southern Shan State. I am excited to be working with the people of Myanmar during this period of rapid change, and I’m particularly interested in how private advisers such as Winrock and MIID can come alongside more local agricultural extension entities in Myanmar and support sustainable development. 

#### ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, *FAO Statistical Pocketbook: Coffee* (Rome: FAO, 2015).

<sup>2</sup> Follow Winrock’s Communications Manager for updates on the VC-RD project at @TimMayBurma.

<sup>3</sup> Government estimates (likely inflated) suggest an annual national output of less than 7,000 tons of green bean coffee, a minor amount when compared to Vietnam’s 1.4 million tons, or even 89,000 tons from Laos. FAO, *FAO Statistical Pocketbook: Coffee* (Rome: FAO, 2015).

<sup>4</sup> Bryan Lewin, Daniele Giovannucci, and Panayotis Varangis, *Coffee Markets: New Paradigms in Global Supply and Demand* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2004).

<sup>5</sup> To learn more about the many methods of processing coffee, visit: <http://www.cafeimports.com/coffee-processes>.

<sup>6</sup> Read about the reception of Myanmar specialty coffees at their first public showing in the United States: <http://www.winrock.org/burmas-coffee-makes-world-debut/>.



Marcelo Pereira, Winrock International

*Sorting coffee in the fading sunlight near the Mya Ze Di monastery.*





# WALKING TOGETHER: A Teaching Metaphor from Myanmar



*Footwear outside a primary classroom at a monastic school.*



*by* Bryan Duff, senior  
lecturer in education

**In 2014,** SEAP approached me to partner with them in developing and teaching a course on education in Asia. I hesitated for two reasons. I had no firsthand and little academic knowledge about education policy and practice in Asian countries. More than that, having never left the U.S. despite growing up in a military family, I felt provincial and therefore eminently unqualified to lead such a course. But once I understood that the envisioned class would comprise a series of guest lectures by experts on Burma, I agreed to the partnership, looking forward to the chance to enrich my understanding of U.S. schools with a comparative perspective.

Though excited, I also second-guessed my decision to participate in a course so different in pedagogic format from my other classes. I specialize in community-engaged courses wherein undergraduates work directly with children or engage in public discussions about education, using what they learn from academic reading, discussion, and personal reflection. As if the content weren't foreign enough to me, a one-credit seminar with guest speakers would feel like teaching on another planet!

But before I could worry too much, Cornell's Office of the Vice Provost for International Affairs released its first Request for Proposals for the Internationalizing the Cornell Curriculum (ICC) grant program. I proposed to SEAP that we apply for funds to infuse community engagement into the new course. In imagining the form of this engagement, I received significant inspiration and practical input from Thamora Fishel, associate director of SEAP; Rosalie Metro, whose dissertation at Cornell focused on the potential impact of history curricula on ethnic conflict in Myanmar; and Kaja McGowan, associate professor in the Department of the History of Art.

The result: a funded proposal for a more focused and experiential version of the original course. Co-taught by Kaja and me in spring 2016, "Crossing Borders in Education: The Case of Myanmar" combined expert guest speakers from all over the world with a pen-pal exchange between Cornell students and peers at the Yangon University of Education as well as weekly participation in an existing after-school program for the children of refugees from Myanmar (mostly from the Karen ethnic group) now living in Ithaca.



The ICC funding enabled me to spend 10 days in Myanmar in January 2016 before the course began. Accompanied by Thamora, whose travel experience and elementary Burmese were invaluable, I visited a variety of schools (primary, secondary, and tertiary; government-run, monastic, and privately funded) and had extended “face time” with the Yangon University of Education students who would be our pen pals and their professor, Aye Aye Cho. The grant also enabled us to bring to campus some guests from Burma whose travel costs would otherwise have been prohibitively expensive.

Before leaving for Myanmar, I thought that I would be able to write each night to process my new experiences and consolidate my memories. But I was too exhausted after dinner to do anything but sleep. Now back in the United States, I am still sifting through these experiences, attempting to analyze and synthesize the rich cultural landscape I was exposed to. But in all my reflections, I keep returning to a metaphor that I heard for the first time in Myanmar: good teaching is “walking together.”

I heard this expression on our first full day in Myanmar. That day, Thamora and I visited the Myanmar Institute of Theology (MIT) in Insein Township in northern Yangon. Founded in 1927 as the Baptist Divinity School, MIT now confers undergraduate and graduate degrees in both theology and the liberal arts. We visited MIT because it is the new professional home of Pan Ei Khin, who had taught Burmese language courses at Cornell as a Fulbright foreign language teaching assistant in 2014–15. During our visit we met MIT professors and officials and joined a few of Pan’s

English classes. Thamora and I spoke with the students, and we asked them (among other things) to tell us about the qualities of their best teachers. One student suggested that “[the best teachers] walk together with their students.” Prompted for more, she said that walking together means that the teacher listens instead of just talking.

To be fair, I was already primed to latch onto the student’s idea. I draw a bright line between teaching and presenting or lecturing. In my world, a teacher is someone who helps others develop knowledge, skills, and insights

an interactive workshop, not bothering until two days before the event to ask my host, Professor Aye Aye Cho, how many attendees she expected. When I finally asked and learned that nearly 200 people would attend, I thought about how I had never talked with a group that big and that it would be difficult for me to be a true teacher for such a large audience. However, learning about “walking together” in Pan’s English class at MIT inspired me to retitile my talk and resolve *not just to talk*.

In my presentation, I shared a few stories about schools and teaching in

the United States but spent most of my time asking questions and responding to answers. Microphones were passed around so that everyone could hear. The response from the students was exceptional. In fact, so many of them got up to speak that I was not able to finish the set of questions and stories I had planned. At the end of my time I thanked the audience and said, “Wow! Your interaction with me suggests that your university is giving

you lots of good practice in walking together.” This earnest compliment turned out to be naive. As I was walking across campus with some students later that day, I asked one of them if he was surprised by the strong participation. He responded with a no, explaining that this had been a rare chance for the students to speak their minds. I understood, then, that such enthusiastic participation was not simply a demonstration of walking together, but was actually the result of students in Myanmar seizing a rare opportunity to participate in a less didactic learning experience.

A few days later, just miles but seemingly a world away, Thamora and I



*Watercolor celebrating Aung Ko and Nge Lay's visit to an arts-immersion elementary school in Rochester, New York called Renaissance Academy Charter School of the Arts.*

through conscientious use of content expertise and attentiveness to learners’ motivational and cognitive starting points. Immediately, I thought, isn’t the strong resonance of the student’s expression just a case of confirmation bias at work? But upon further reflection, I realized that this visual metaphor for interactive pedagogy was new, layered, and beautiful. I wrote it down immediately.

In fact, I did more than write it down. I used the expression and its spirit the next day when I was scheduled to give a presentation at the Yangon University of Education. Myopically (as I was accustomed to leading seminars with 25 or fewer students), I had prepared



visited a place where such interactive learning experiences are common. I first learned about the Pre-Collegiate Program (Pabedan Township, Yangon)—and the debt it owes to John Badgley, former curator of Cornell's Echols Collection on Southeast Asia—through an article in the journal *Education About Asia*. High school students enrolled in this program spend 16 months immersed in Socratic seminars, field trips, internships, and community service. In short, they participate in the kind of education that will prepare them for entering selective liberal arts colleges and universities around the world. The end goal of the program is to have the students return to Myanmar as change agents.

During our classroom visit, the Pre-Collegiate students seemed well on

their way to that strong sense of agency. Thamora and I were not allowed to be spectators that morning; rather, we were pulled immediately into small group discussions of a short text on a case of medical ethics. Though I noticed a small degree of deference to us as guests (first and foremost) and as PhDs, the students humbly but vigorously challenged me to define my terms and consider other perspectives on the case. We all held each other to this standard: Is your point clear, and is it robust? We listened carefully, and we asked each other questions. We never left our chairs, but we were definitely walking together.

Months later back in the U.S., I would hear the words “walking together” again when Burmese artists Nge Lay and Aung Ko (and their 8-month-old

daughter, Dahlia) visited Cornell to speak with students in the course that Kaja McGowan and I co-taught. Nge Lay came to our attention as a potential guest speaker we wanted to invite because of her installation, “The Sick Classroom,” which is composed of life-sized wooden sculptures showing students and a teacher in a Myanmar classroom. “The Sick Classroom” draws our attention to large class sizes, minimal supplies, and a teacher-cen-



## CHO'S DREAM FOR MYANMAR

by Dr. Aye Aye Cho, professor, Yangon University of Education

What is my dream for Myanmar? It is big. I want to see my country develop economically and socially so that every person can live comfortably and happily. For such development, education is the key because only good schools can develop our most precious resources: not jade or teak, but people.

But we have to walk a very long journey. I recently met with teachers throughout Myanmar as part of a course for in-service teachers who want to transition into high school teaching—in Myanmar, high school teachers require more education than primary and middle school teachers. Their hearts are good, but it was clear that many of them have limited knowledge of how to help students develop 21st-century skills, such as mathematical and scientific thinking, creativity, and collaboration. My colleagues and I in teacher education can help, but we cannot do it alone. We need to walk together with development partners inside and outside Myanmar, including our friends at Cornell.

We have begun that process. For example, when Drs. Bryan and Thamora came to Myanmar in January 2016, they brought gifts that included videos of effective teaching. We know that watching good practice is more effective than just reading about it, but it is hard for us to get such videos in my country. We also had the opportunity to watch a live example of such practice when Dr. Bryan gave a lecture to our students and faculty at Yangon University of Education. My colleagues were amazed; they had never experienced such a lecture from a foreign expert. Dr. Bryan asked provoking questions about the purpose of school and then listened to the audience.

I visited Cornell in April 2016 to talk with the students in a course taught by Drs. Bryan and Kaja. While in Ithaca, I also had a chance to watch the after-school film program that Dr. Bryan organizes for a different class. I want to introduce a program like this one because I believe that such a class can promote student creativity and happiness beyond the important but limited technical exercises of the traditional art classes in many Myanmar schools.

My dream is big, but as my country changes politically and travel and communication become easier, I believe the dream is achievable. I look forward to working with my Cornell friends and using our human resources to help each other.





Top: Nge Lay and Bryan speak with students at the arts-immersion school in Rochester, N.Y.  
Below: Nge Lay's art installation, "The Sick Classroom."

tered learning environment—qualities poorly suited to promoting hope and optimism.

The work is based on many visits to Aung Ko's home village of Thuyedan, where Nge Lay documented the local school through film and eventually partnered with a local woodcarver on the installation. While discussing her work with the villagers on that project and others, Nge Lay was careful to describe the manner of her collaboration. She contrasted a didactic approach—one that clearly elevated

her expertise and experience as an artist—with the approach she actually used: "walking together."

Wanting Nge Lay and Aung Ko to leave Ithaca with an image of a *well* classroom, I offered to take them to Rochester to an arts-immersion charter elementary school called Renaissance Academy Charter School of the Arts. During a tour we saw visual art all over the building and, maybe even more surprising and delightful, witnessed a required movement-and-dance class in action. Nge Lay and I then spoke

with a third-grade class for an hour. We showed photos of Nge Lay's work, which included "The Sick Classroom," and the students asked questions—so many questions. The sense of varied intellectual and physical movement contrasted beautifully with the homogeneity of their uniforms. Aung Ko expertly captured this tension in a watercolor he painted shortly after the visit.

While processing my experiences in Myanmar after I returned to the United States, I initially resisted meditating on the concept of "walking together" because I thought it already resonated with my pre-existing beliefs and therefore did not stretch my thinking. I do indeed hope to review other possibly dissonant parts of my Myanmar experience in time and with support from friends in SEAP. However, I now realize that resonance is not just echo and amplification. It adds tones and texture to a sound. My Myanmar experience did not only give me new words to express my sense of good teaching. It also provided a powerful image and a renewed commitment to this pedagogy.

The *walking* in "walking together" conveys movement and dynamism without falling into the mile-a-minute trap. We live in fast times. Mental patience and stamina—the kind of slower, mindful thinking that helps us avoid heuristic traps—are potential casualties. Rather than race to the top, schools might encourage students to slow down, look around, and listen carefully. And the *together* part is key, too. Walking together means that we pay attention to each other; we notice when our partners are winded, bored, or in need of a change of pace. Yes, teachers have more knowledge and experience for guiding, pointing out insights, and helping novices avoid dangerous terrain. But novices notice things, too, and only a sense of walking together will prime a teacher to slow down and listen to them. Though I consciously practice this pedagogy in my classrooms, I am more fit and energized from walking together with my friends in Myanmar. 🌿

<sup>1</sup> Helen Waller, Dorothy Guyot, and Win Kyaw, "Ideas from a Vibrant Liberal Arts School in Myanmar," *Education About Asia* 20, no. 1 (2015): 59-63.



The 10<sup>th</sup>  
Frank H. Golay  
Memorial Lecture,  
Writing Regional and  
National Histories  
of Southeast Asia:

# Potentialities and Problems



by Barbara Watson Andaya, professor of Asian studies at the University of Hawaii and Leonard Y. Andaya, professor of Southeast Asian history at the University of Hawaii

The invitation from the Southeast Asia Program to deliver the Tenth Frank H. Golay Memorial Lecture came unexpectedly, but we were delighted to accept, particularly since it would be our first chance to return to Cornell since 1991. We are hon-

*The Portuguese capture of the great Malay port of Melaka in 1511 resulted in significant economic and religious changes, especially in the island world.*





ored that the written version of our talk is appearing in the same issue of the SEAP newsletter that will pay tribute to the academic and personal legacy of Benedict O’Gorman Anderson. In fall of 1967, when we were young graduate students, we both registered in a reading course with Ben. There is no need to tell you that it was rigorous and intensely demanding (one book and a paper per week), or that it was immensely stimulating. We are sure that sharing this testing experience played a significant part in bonding our relationship! Ben was a member of both our PhD committees, and we will always be grateful for the multiple ways in which he fostered unexpected but revealing approaches to the study of Southeast Asia.

As we prepared this presentation, we were also conscious of standing in a tradition that Cornell has always fostered, one that stresses Southeast Asia’s regional connections. We were both trained under O.W. Wolters, and his dictate that comparative studies stand as the “ultimate justification” for regional studies has deeply affected our work as historians.<sup>1</sup> Like Wolters, we accept that an understanding of regional similarities and differences can only be established when we appreciate the dynamics and singularities of specific situations. However, negotiating the delicate interplay between local exceptionalism and regional similarities represents a major challenge for those who seek to respond to the call from Ruth McVey, who delivered the third Golay lecture in 1996. Locating Southeast Asian studies in a more globalized context, she argued that scholars of the region have bypassed opportunities to engage with a wider academic community and have not responded adequately to demands for studies that transverse national boundaries. Too often, she said, “their interest stops at the borders of the nation-state where their research is centered,” and she urged her audience to think about matters that are of “broad concern” and to which “the study of Southeast Asia can contribute.”<sup>2</sup>

Although the field has moved on during the last twenty years, in many respects Ruth’s words are still relevant. Our doctoral dissertations were textual and archive-based studies of particular Malay states, and we continue to believe that close investigation of primary sources is fundamental if the history of Southeast Asia is to be advanced. As we grow older the scope of our research has widened, but we have no doubt that the best kind of historical work strikes a balance between local specificities and a broader framework. What then, is that “broader framework” to be? How can Southeast Asian studies retain some identity and yet become part of a wider conversation?

This question becomes particularly pertinent when we turn

to the burgeoning field of “world history,” which has become a popular substitute for the old “Western Civ” courses that for many years were taught at Cornell as HIST 151 by the late L. Pierce Williams (and for which Barbara was a teaching assistant in 1968). To some degree the inclusion of Southeast Asia in textbooks used in “World History” survey courses in

the United States has been addressed, but there are still significant gaps in the more specialized literature. For instance, even though studies of the “medieval Islamic world” usually include the seventeenth century, developments in Southeast Asia are often completely ignored. We cannot simply wait for experts on other world areas to see the global saliency of what for them is a little-known region where generalizations are difficult. If Southeast Asianists want to engage with “world history,” they will have to mount a persuasive case that they have something to bring to the table.

The conviction that historical developments in Southeast Asia are of direct relevance to a globalizing world has helped motivate us in two recent projects: the writing of a regional history of Southeast Asia in the “early modern” period, and a third edition of our *History of Malaysia*, which was first published in 1982.

Although the country-focused *History of Malaysia* stretches from early times to the present day and the regional *A History of Early Modern Southeast Asia* concentrates on a specific time period, they have several features in common. Both are concerned with questions of historical periodization; both constructed a narrative that overrides modern political boundaries; both moved away from a concentration on powerful centers that have dominated national and regional histories; both highlight lesser-known areas and those who live at the margins of state authority. In each book, we are attentive to local responses to shifts in global economies and the influences brought about by the strengthening of world-wide connections. In each case, we reflected on changes in human groupings over time, especially regarding conceptualizations of identity, and how group affinities have been reconstituted and redefined. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, we aimed to make our writing and presentation of historical complexities accessible to students, while at the same time offering information and ideas of interest to our colleagues.

## Writing a History of “Early Modern” Southeast Asia

This rather ambitious project took many years to complete. We were first contacted by Cambridge in 2006, but it was not until our sabbatical in 2007 that we could begin serious work.



This “walking Buddha,” probably made in the Thai center of Lopburi in the 13th-14th century when Khmer influence was strong, is an example of the ‘localization’ of religious images (Walters Art Museum, Baltimore).





In the interim, however, we did devote some time to thinking of how we could approach this rather formidable task.

At the outset, we made our position clear in regard to two specific issues. The first was the question of Southeast Asia as a region. We accepted that “Southeast Asia” is an arbitrary term that has been reinforced by academia and funding institutions. We understand why some historians see a divide between mainland and island Southeast Asia, especially in regard to state formation and the experience with Europeans. We appreciate that the present-day boundaries of Southeast Asia were never precisely delineated in the past. At the edges of what are now established academic and even political regions, the interests of powerful centers overlapped. The agility with which people living in such places negotiated relationships with rival overlords is itself a testimony to what H.G. Quaritch Wales called the “local genius.” Nonetheless, remembering that individuals from beyond Southeast Asia from very early times did see “the lands below the winds” or “the Southern Seas” as collectively different, we believe that cultural elements and long-term interaction do support arguments that this is an identifiable region which has its own forms of coherence.

Beginning with the assumption that Southeast Asia was indeed a region, we then decided that another controversial term requiring clarification was the historical period termed “early modern.” In 1926, a textbook on European history first proposed the idea of early modern with the intention of demonstrating that the Renaissance and the Reformation had no real legitimacy as meaningful historical periods. Though European scholars were dubious, in the 1950s and 1960s American historians were more amenable, since they found early modern useful in designating a period from the mid-fifteenth century to about 1780–1830 which incorporated European settlement and the beginnings of U.S. history. For world history more generally a turning point came in 1970, with Eugene Rice’s *Foundations of Early Modern Europe, 1460-1559*, and the launch of the Cambridge Studies of Early Modern History. Since that time, early modern has gained popularity, even in studies of the non-Western world. In 1993, for instance, Conrad Totman’s study of the Tokugawa era was entitled *Early Modern Japan*, while the eminent South Asianist John Richards remarked that early modern made greater sense than “late medieval India,” or “Mughal India,” much less “late precolonial India.” In this context the conference on early modern Southeast Asia organized by Anthony Reid in 1989 was ahead of the game. At the time we ourselves had some doubts about whether the term would become generally accepted. We have now become convinced that early modern

is useful in identifying a period in world history marked by a rapid development of global links in which Southeast Asia played an intimate part.

We gave considerable thought to the book’s organization, given its orientation toward classroom use. Chapter 1 concentrates on geography and the environment, which explain Southeast Asia’s long-term trading connections and the nature of the various polities that arose in the early modern period. Chapter 2 discusses aspects of the earlier “charter,” or “classical” period, which we consider to be essential for understanding subsequent developments. The following chapters, which proceed chronologically, are divided roughly into spans of a hundred years, partially coinciding with common-era centuries but bookmarked by regionally significant events. Each begins with an introduction providing a brief survey of global events that had an impact on Southeast Asia

at that particular time. We then turn to a discussion of the general features that characterized the period/chapter under consideration before turning to the historical narrative. In order to give all Southeast Asia due attention, we conceived of the region as divided into zones (that typically transversed the boundaries of modern nation-states): the western, central, northern, and eastern archipelago and

the western, central, and eastern mainland. This strategy enabled us to give more focused attention to the eastern archipelago and border areas, which are overlooked in most texts. In addition, it allows readers wishing to follow the history of one particular zone to read consecutively through the entire book, while giving them a general idea of developments elsewhere in the region. In each chapter, a final paragraph draws the general features together, offers some qualifications, and leads into the next period/chapter. The book itself ends with a conclusion summarizing what we see as the features of the early modern period.

In identifying these features, we see broad parallels with the early modern characteristics outlined by the late Jerry Bentley in relation to European history: economic and demographic growth, the emergence of sovereign states, and the expansion of seaborne trading empires and their worldwide networks. In the first place, there can be no doubt that in Southeast Asia the period between the fifteenth and early nineteenth centuries witnessed an intensification of global connections, notably after the arrival of Europeans in the sixteenth century. While the establishment of the galleon trade from the Philippines to Mexico in 1565 represents the final global link, joining Asia and the Pacific, maritime transport facilitated unprecedented movement between Southeast Asia and the great centers of the early modern world—not only



Portuguese map of Southeast Asia.



London, The Hague and Paris, but also Persia and Mughal India. Nor were older connections lost, for envoys continued to visit China, carrying tribute and gifts that would attract imperial favor, and at times solidifying friendships with other representatives from China's extensive tributary world.

These connections were underpinned by a second factor: the growth of global trade, and particularly, the increasing demand for Southeast Asian goods. The market for spices finds a place in most world history textbooks, but less well known is the movement of other exotic products like bird of paradise feathers, "sea cucumbers," ambergris, and the multiple resins and woods obtained from jungle trees. Here and elsewhere, we give special attention to forest-dwellers and those who lived on the seas because they were the primary collectors of these valued items. We remind readers that Southeast Asians were also anxious to obtain goods from overseas, especially ceramics, cloth, and weaponry. When supplies were limited, they were quick to respond, and the finely executed Thai and Vietnamese ceramics show their readiness to fill lapses in trade connections, like the so-called Ming Gap. The eagerness to satisfy a market, however, did

have its negative side. In Siam and Cambodia native deer were virtually wiped out by the almost insatiable Japanese market, and sandalwood, which had once drawn so many traders to the eastern Indonesian archipelago, had almost disappeared by the early eighteenth century. It is hardly surprising that the lords of Sumba refused to enter into a treaty to supply sandalwood to the Dutch East India Company.

A third feature of the early modern period, and one that is closely linked to trading connections, is the expansion of the world religions and their ongoing adaptation to the local environment. The landscape itself was now imagined in different ways, as places already deemed sacred assumed a new significance because the Buddha had once stopped here to refresh himself, or because a Sufi saint had arrived to spread Islam's message. The spread of religions often introduced disturbing ideas, such as the Muslim/Christian notion of an ultimate judgment day, when all individuals would stand before God to be judged by their deeds. Such ideas injected a new tension into a population already sensitive to unusual natural occurrences—an eclipse, a shooting star, an earthquake, or a tsunami—believed to presage some momentous

## The Tenth Frank H. Golay Memorial Lecture

Frank Hindman Golay (1915–1990) came to Cornell University in 1953 as an assistant professor of economics and Asian studies. He became a full professor in 1962 and remained at Cornell until his retirement in 1981. He was chair of Cornell's Department of Economics from 1963 to 1967 and director of the university's Southeast Asia Program from 1970 to 1976. In the latter capacity, and as director of the program's Philippine Project (1967–73) and London–Cornell Project (1968–70), he contributed much to strengthening Southeast Asian studies at Cornell. He was appointed to visiting professorships at London University's School of Oriental and African Studies (Fulbright–Hays) from 1965 to 1966 and at the University of the Philippines (Rockefeller Foundation) from 1973 to 1974.

For his scholarship on the Philippines, Frank Golay was awarded an honorary doctor of law degree by the Ateneo de Manila in 1966. He was awarded research fellowships by the Guggenheim and the Luce Foundations, the Social Science Research Council, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the United States Educational Foundation (Fulbright). Golay further served as chairman of the Philippines Council of the Asia Foundation (1964–67) and as the president of the Association for Asian Studies in 1984.

## Returning to a History of Malaysia: The Third Edition

The first edition of our *History of Malaysia* was written in 1979 (published in 1982), the second in 1999 (published 2001), and the third between 2014 and 2016. We embarked on this third edition because of the extensive political and social changes that have occurred since the second edition appeared, and because we believe that Malaysia has reached a critical point in its history. Furthermore, while public interest in the country's history has increased markedly, it is disturbingly apparent that various groups are interpreting the past in ways that serve their own agendas. In this climate, we believe it is of prime importance to present the history of Malaysia's development as a nation in accordance with the strengths of the historical discipline: awareness of the limitations of the sources, as well as the insights they provide, and an insistence that arguments and conclusions be based on verifiable evidence.

As before, the third edition gives considerable attention to the wider pre-nineteenth century Malay world and to the history of the Borneo states, often neglected in studies that conflate "Malaysia" with the Malay Peninsula. While we have incorporated new research on earlier periods, we have given considerable attention to the changes that have taken place in more recent times. In particular, we have identified what we see as the most significant developments in modern Malaysian history—the rise of a Malay middle class; the increasing Islamization of government and public life more generally, and the resulting tensions in a country with large non-Muslim populations; and the emergence of an effective civil society movement connected nationally and globally through the Internet and social media. Since we have no intention of embarking on a fourth revision, this book must stand as our legacy to a field of study in which we have been involved for over forty years and from which we have gained not only academic stimulation but great personal pleasure.





or catastrophic event. At the same time, the domestication of the new faiths speaks to a shrinking world, where traveling monks, priests, and teachers created their own networks of transmission and translations linked to distant holy places. Sunan Kalijaga, one of Java's nine *wali* (Sufi saints), is thus said to have reached over and realigned the mosque of Demak with Mecca. In the Christian sphere, holy images traveled between Catholic centers such as Goa, Melaka, Macau, and Manila, and the revered Virgin of Antipolo crossed the Pacific eight times when galleon captains requested her protection on the voyage to Mexico.

The widening domains of supralocal religions are closely connected to a fourth feature: the transfer and exchange of technology and other skills. Scholars have given particular attention to weaponry, but armaments were valued not merely for use in warfare but also because they were imbued with spiritual power. Given noble titles and regarded as possessing unique authority, the large cannon acquired from Ottoman Turkey or European trading companies were often incorporated into royal regalia and regarded as state palladia. Yet although Southeast Asians were eager to learn from the world beyond, there are innumerable examples of local initiatives, like the special containers invented by the Vietnamese to protect gunpowder from humidity. The extraordinary boat-building and navigational skills of Southeast Asians are a matter of record, but equally impressive is their botanical knowledge and use of indigenous plants in medicines that were manifestly more effective than those prescribed by European doctors. It is also useful to remember that women could play a significant part in experimentation and adaptation. In the late eighteenth century, for instance, a Dutch observer remarked that in Palembang women knew how to prepare and deal with silk so that it not only held its color longer but could even be washed.

A fifth feature of this period is demographic change. Although reliable statistics are generally absent, we do have parish registers and tribute lists from the Philippines, which show a marked decline in populations in areas closest to Spanish presence, primarily because of epidemics but additionally because of Spanish military action. Between 1700

and 1800, however, Linda Newson has estimated that the number of tribute payers in Luzon and the Visayas more than doubled. In other parts of Southeast Asia, where warfare was reduced or absent, we see similar upward trends. Human mobility further contributed to demographic shifts as people relocated to urban centers and port cities to take advantage of trade opportunities, or moved ahead of government to escape taxes or required labor. Sexual liaisons and intermarriage led to the emergence of hybrid cultures like the Betawi in Batavia, the Baba Chinese of Melaka, or the "black Portuguese," who were such a force in the eastern archipelago. But mobility has its darker side, for much of this movement was due to slave raiding, the capture of war prisoners, forced settlement, and the flight of whole communities to escape epidemic or conflict.



*Based on a sketch made from life, this engraving of barter trade in Melaka illustrates the prominence of Southeast Asian women in the marketplace.*

Finally, there is the issue of state formation. While we can see a trajectory toward centralization in the major river valley basins of mainland Southeast Asia, we emphasize the persistence of smaller, independent polities, particularly in the island regions, but also in the highland areas of the mainland. Siam was still mapping out its terrain of sovereignty well into the late nineteenth century, and in 1826 the Lord of Chiang Mai could thus term himself "ruler of fifty-seven provinces and the richest throne in

the East." Smaller "mandala-type" arrangements persisted among the Tai communities on the borders of Yunnan and the Upper Mekong River, and Sipsong Panna offers just one example of a polity that maintained an adroit balancing act between the Burmese and the Chinese. In island Southeast Asia, the variety of forms of government is even more evident, from the Bugis federations of southwest Sulawesi, with their stress on the equality of brothers, to the networks connecting the small trading settlements, or *sosolot*, of eastern New Guinea. In the Philippines, too, we argue for a similar retention of indigenous agency, since Spanish control was concentrated in urban areas and the numbers of clerics were never sufficient to exert authority much beyond the sound of the church bells.

What then brought Southeast Asia's early modern period to an end? Although colonialism as such was not envisaged,



by the early nineteenth century increasing European pressure resulted in a steady retraction of local agency. On the mainland, this is clearly evident in 1826 with Myanmar's loss of territory after the first Anglo-Burmese War, while in the Malay world the 1824 Anglo-Dutch Treaty severed Sumatra from the Malay Peninsula and in so doing divided "brother from brother, father from son and friend from friend."<sup>3</sup> Writing in Britain just a few years later, the young John Stuart Mills conceptualized the "spirit of the age" as transitional, holding out prospects of far-reaching but ultimately positive change. On the other side of the world, many Southeast Asians were aware that they too lived at time of great uncertainty, but for them the future appeared far less positive. In the words of a Malay text, "The state of the world is in constant flux; what was above descended to below and what was below rose up to above."<sup>4</sup> Yet although we see Southeast Asia's early modern period as coming to an end around 1830, the book finishes on a positive note. In our view, the resourcefulness and adaptability traced through our history left a legacy that became a key element in molding the new unities that eventually emerged after the Second World War.

The final revisions were sent to Cambridge in September 2013, but production issues and the preparation of the index took some time to complete, and it was thus a great pleasure to receive the book when it finally reached us in March 2015. Hanging over our heads, however, was another unfinished project—the revision of the *History of Malaysia*, for which we had contracted a good five years earlier. With our energy renewed by concern at recent developments in Malaysia, we returned to the task and delivered the manuscript in early 2016. We hope that this third edition can be used profitably by all who challenge the ideologically driven and politically motivated pronouncements that are currently all too common.

## Reflections on Writing Regional and National Histories

Scholarship on Southeast Asia has tended to follow disciplinary trends that usually begin in the Western world or outside the region, but there is a real danger of interpreting the evidence so that it can become part of a fashionable global trend. On the other hand, it is important for those working on Southeast Asia, whether regionally or on individual countries and societies, to bring their findings to the attention of a wider community. This can only be accomplished through emphasizing connections that are of interest to scholars working on other world areas. In this regard, one of the great strengths of Southeast Asia as a region and of the training that we have all

received is the ability to think comparatively. The region has always been globally linked, and there are many avenues of research where Southeast Asia can provide perspectives that have implications for broader academic work. For example, the region provides alternative ways of thinking about "non-state" societies, where cultural and economic networks operated without giving rise to an overarching political authority. A region where water makes up 75 percent of the entire area offers great opportunities to approach the sea not merely as a surface for conveying traders, but as a historical theater for human action and connectivities. In thinking of comparative religious studies, the complexities and contradictions of "moderate Islam" in Malaysia and Indonesia present an object lesson in the different ways that Muslims practice their faith. Such topics are just some among the many that have the potential to establish intellectual linkages beyond the often confined world of Southeast Asian studies.

In our years of research and teaching, we have been constantly reminded that the excitement of working as a historian of Southeast Asia owes much to recurring opportunities to ask new questions of old sources, as well as to the discovery of new sources that cast a different light on old questions. In 2005, for instance, records from the only Malay-majority regiment in the Malayan National Liberation Army were donated to Amsterdam's Institute of Social History and may reveal much about ethnic relations between Malay and Chinese who subscribed to a common communist ideology. Digitization of material deposited in distant libraries and archives but now posted on the Internet makes it possible to tap sources without expensive and time-consuming periods away from home. Translation projects, like the recent publication of the *Chronicle of Sipsongpanna*, open the door for further investigation of previously neglected areas, while tenacious research can uncover unsuspected histories, such as the sung epics, the *iko-iko*, of the Sama Bajau communities in southeast Sulawesi.

Finally, we would like to thank the Southeast Asia Program for the privilege of presenting the tenth Golay lecture. Although we hardly think of ourselves as "senior," since we always feel we still have so much to learn, longevity does enable us to look back at developments in the field of Southeast Asia history over the last forty years. When we were graduate students, there was no "early modern" period, and scholars of Southeast Asia were still stressing the need for "autonomous" histories. The academic distance traveled since that time is considerable, but we have every confidence that the next generation of historians will advance the field even further. 🐉

<sup>1</sup> O.W. Wolters, *History, Culture and Region in Southeast Asian Perspectives*, rev. ed. (Ithaca and Singapore: Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University and Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1999), p. 235.

<sup>2</sup> Ruth McVey, "Globalization, Marginalization and the Study of Southeast Asia," in *Southeast Asian Studies: Reorientations* (Ithaca: Cornell Southeast Asia Program, 1998), pp. 37–64.

<sup>3</sup> Bendahara of Pahang to Governor of Melaka, cited in *Notes and Queries, 1885–1887*, ed. W. E. Maxwell (Kuala Lumpur: MBRAS Reprint, 1997), p. 127.

<sup>4</sup> Barbara Watson Andaya and Leonard Y. Andaya, *A History of Early Modern Southeast Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 301, 332.





# Knowing History, Knowing Self: The Beginnings of Voices on Vietnam



by Yen Vu, Ph.D.  
candidate, romance  
studies



*"No history, no self;  
know history, know self."*

*Local tomato plants in Lạc Viên, Lâm Đồng, in Southern Vietnam, a couple houses down from where I grew up before moving to the U.S.*

The student activists with which I surrounded myself during my undergraduate studies at UC Berkeley have a motto: "No history, no self; know history, know self." A witty slogan that justified many of the teach-ins and workshops that were constantly going on at the time, it has far more than one meaning. It captures not only a general idea of the role history plays in the making of identity, but also how the degree to which history determines identity, or vice versa, varies greatly for everyone, not only for the self-searching college student. When I heard the motto for the first time, it was ingenious and immediately personal: it prompted me to ask questions about my family's history and offered a model by which my struggles of the past could be validated through their incorporation into my present identity.

Growing up in Southern California, a haven for many Vietnamese immi-

grants after the end of the war in 1975, I had a very particular idea of what Vietnam *was*, the past tense looming indefinitely. For a long time, it was more than enough for me to know the stories my parents didn't often discuss, and I was grateful for the opportunity to understand the reason for our arrival to the United States. Yet, I felt loss—not because Vietnam was no longer the country I inhabited, but because surrounded by other Vietnamese immigrants of different generations, and my father's own military involvement in the Vietnam War as a South Vietnam lieutenant, I had inherited a certain nostalgia with which I deeply sympathized and identified.

While it was not quite complacency, I never wondered about the stories that existed other than the ones I knew. Even in college when I was actively involved in the Vietnamese Student Association, our emblem was a three-striped flag,

and April 30 was a commemoration of the Fall of Saigon. For as long as I stayed within this context, physically in California and temporally in the past, I could not see past a Vietnam that no longer existed, unable to establish for myself a relationship with my country of birth in the present, independent of these inherited ideas.

Seeing "No history, no self; know history, know self," a contemporary scholar might critically ask: which histories? The idea that more than one narrative makes up different histories marks an important shift in scholarship today, but this idea is still something we take for granted. Assuming that there is a one-to-one relationship between a history and a people or an individual, why wouldn't there be plural histories to represent so many different peoples in the world? To what extent do we, as a single individual or a community, take into account more than one nar-





Olga Dror, Nha Ca, and Thuy Tranviet answer questions during Voices on Vietnam's Fall 2015 event.

rative in order to shape what becomes our history and our identity? We may find many versions of a similar experience, but do we also find the courage to listen to stories that undermine those we know, that come from our historical enemies, or that are conceived from a completely different perspective and background?

Such understanding of history is not only applicable to the construction of identity, but it also seeps through what we do as scholars—our research—extending into the construction of an entire academic field. In the case of Vietnamese studies, I am not alone in recognizing that much academic scholarship has been dominated by American perspectives, experiences, and sources, in part due to the American investment in the war. Recognizing the importance of bridging a widespread scholarship of Vietnamese studies, three history Ph.D. students: Alex-Thai Vo, Hoang Vu, and Sean Fear, each coming from a different personal background and a different investment in their study of Vietnam, decided to organize a forum in order to bring together diverse voices about Vietnam. The result was Voices on Vietnam, a biannual speaker series that incorporates perspectives that include Vietnamese voices and sources without being limited to them.

The idea for the speaker series drew from the success of the Voices from the South symposium, held at Cornell 2012, which gave many military, civilian, and opposition leaders from the Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam) a chance to share their experiences living under South Vietnam's Second Republic (1967–1975). The inaugural Voices on Vietnam event took place on April 29, 2015, a date that marked forty years after the end of the war. In an open forum Professors Fredrik Logevall,

Harvard University, and Keith Taylor, Cornell University, two leading experts in the field, shared their latest research and thoughts on the current state and future prospects of the field of Vietnamese studies and history. This event set a precedent for the series and the Voices on Vietnam mission in general, which is to acknowledge that different



Nhà sách cũ, or the Old Bookstore, is an institution in Hà Nội for Vietnamese studies scholars.

perspectives, while contentious, can be productive in nuancing the examination of history. My own investment in Voices on Vietnam draws upon this very mission that opens up a space for dialogue among these perspectives.

Since its inauguration, Voices on Vietnam has received an incredible amount of support from the departments of History, Government, and Asian Studies, as well as the Southeast Asia Program and the East Asia Program, allowing us to hold a series event each semester. In fall 2015, Southern Vietnamese writer Nha Ca and Professor Olga Dror shared insights gained from their collaboration in the translation of Nha Ca's book *Mourning Headband for*

*Hue* (Indiana University Press, 2014). This account of what is known as the 1968 Tet Offensive reoriented the idea of war away from the view that it is a battle between opponents and instead captured the precariousness of human life amidst violence. Nha Ca's anti-war stance did not hold a political agenda, for her intention was to portray how loss of human life and dignity is not relegated to any one side. This was one voice that had not been heard in American anti-war narratives.

In spring 2015, in collaboration with the SEAP Gatty Lecture Series, Voices on Vietnam invited Professor Chris Goscha to speak about his latest work, *The Penguin History of Modern Vietnam* (Allen Lane, 2016). Moving away from a history bound to Cold War tensions in this general account intended for both specialists and nonscholars, Goscha portrays a wide cast of characters, from kings to priests to revolutionaries, but also those often marginalized in accounts of Vietnam such as the highlanders and ethnic minorities. This overview of modern Vietnamese history sheds light on the complexities of histories by examining themes such as periodization, questioning what "modern" might mean, and exploring the possibility of multiple and divided Vietnams.

The suggestion that there could be Vietnams in the plural is a reminder of the irreducibility of different experiences in what is to be roughly considered history. For me, I didn't begin to hear stories other than my own until I chose to study Vietnam in graduate school at Cornell. It is a privilege as a scholar to have access to stories other than one's own and to be able to draw from these different experiences in a critical way in order to understand one's own. We all have distinct relationships with our research and unique ways in which we construct our identities. Assuming we take k(no)wing history, k(no)wing self as one formula, we might arrive at one conjugation: while we might not ever know enough history to say we know ourselves, the way in which we value history to be shared, exchanged, and opened up is already revealing who we are. 🍵



# Southeast Asian Language Week Celebrates Language and Culture from the Region



by Stefanie Tanaka, SEAP spring  
2016 communications intern

In mid-April, SEAP celebrated its variety of language course offerings by organizing Southeast Asian Language Week, a week full of fun activities that embraced Southeast Asian culture and promoted language study. Alongside lectures and language tables, students literally got a taste of Southeast Asia through spice samplings, cooking demonstrations, and coffee and tea tastings, including offerings of artichoke tea from Vietnam and lemongrass tea enhanced with turmeric and coco sugar from the Philippines. At the six different Southeast Asian language tables set up all over campus throughout the week, students could practice Indonesian, Khmer, Thai, Vietnamese, Tagalog, and/or Burmese phrases and interact with native speakers. In turn, the language activity

*Cooking demonstration with owners of Tamarind Thai Restaurant, Khun Phiw and Khun Phloy. Khun Phiw is demonstrating how to make green curry paste.*







tables gave native speakers the opportunity to meet and network with peers who have a genuine interest in learning their language and culture.

The week culminated in more cultural exchange at music and dance performances and cooking competitions organized by three of Cornell's Southeast Asian student organizations: the Cornell Vietnamese Association (CVA), the Cornell Filipino Association, and the Cornell Thai Association. According to Betty Nguyen, SEAP administrative assistant and co-advisor of CVA, "what we all take away from these events are the connections made and the lasting relationships established." When you spend time with a group of people, studying a language together or planning a cultural event, you develop deep bonds with them. "CVA has a phrase: 'CVA Love,'" says Betty. "It really does feel like a family away from home."

Find out how you can get involved in SEAP and study a Southeast Asian language here: <https://seap.einaudi.cornell.edu/resources-students>.



*Clockwise from top: One of six language tables held throughout the week. Faculty, staff, and students get together at the Big Red Barn for the Vietnamese language table; newly designed SEAP t-shirt for sale along with free SEAP buttons in six Southeast Asian languages taught at Cornell; a variety of spices used for the cooking demonstration on how to make green curry paste; spices were passed around for students to discover; coffee and tea tastings held at Willard Straight Hall, Trillium, and Mann library lobby.*





# SEAP PUBLICATIONS

## *The Palace Law of Ayutthaya and the Thammasat: Law and Kingship in Siam*

by Chris Baker and Pasuk Phongpaichit, trans. and ed.

This book contains the first academic translations of key legal texts from the Ayutthaya era (1351–1767), along with a challenging essay on the role of law in Thai history.

The legal history of Southeast Asia has languished because few texts are accessible in translation. The Three Seals Code is a collection of Thai legal manuscripts surviving from the Ayutthaya era. The Palace Law, probably dating to the late fifteenth century, was the principal law on kingship and government. The Thammasat, a descendant of India's *dharmaśāstra*, stood at the head of the code and gave it authority. Here these two key laws are presented in English translation for the first time along with detailed annotations and analyses of their content.

The coverage of family arrangements, court protocol, warfare, royal women, and ceremonial conduct in the Palace Law presents a detailed portrayal of Siamese kingship, reaching beyond terms such as *devaraja*, *thammaraja*, and *cakravartin*. Close analysis of the Thammasat questions the assumption that this text has a long-standing and fundamental role in Thai legal practice. Royal law-making had a large and hitherto unappreciated role in the premodern Thai state. This book is an important contribution to Thai history, Southeast Asian history, and comparative legal studies.

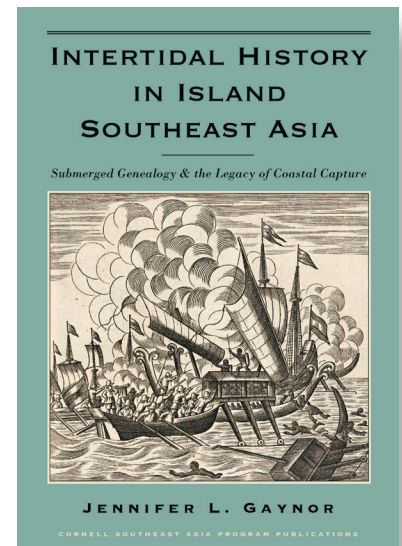
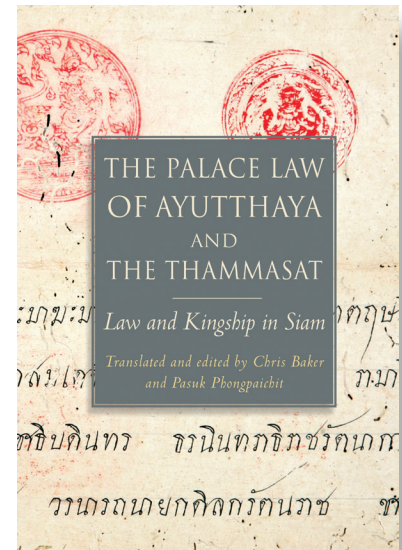
**AUTHORS' BIOS:** Chris Baker formerly taught Asian history at Cambridge University and has lived in Thailand for over thirty years. Pasuk Phongpaichit is professor of economics at Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok. Their joint publications include *Thailand: Economy and Politics* (second ed., 2002), *A History of Thailand* (second ed., 2009), and *The Tale of Khun Chang Khun Phaen* (2010), winner of the 2013 Becker Translation Prize from the Association of Asian Studies. They have also translated works by King Rama V, Pridi Banomyong, the Communist Party of Thailand, and the Thai historians Chatthip Nartsupha and Nidhi Eoseewong.

## *Intertidal History in Island Southeast Asia: Submerged Genealogy and the Legacy of Coastal Capture*

by Jennifer L. Gaynor

*Intertidal History in Island Southeast Asia* shows the vital part maritime Southeast Asians played in struggles against domination of the seventeenth-century spice trade by local and European rivals. Looking beyond the narrative of competing mercantile empires, it draws on European and Southeast Asian sources to illustrate the Sama sea people's alliances and intermarriages with the sultanate of Makassar and the Bugis realm of Boné. Contrasting with later portrayals of the Sama as stateless pirates and sea gypsies, this history of shifting political and inter-ethnic ties among the people of Sulawesi's littorals and its land-based realms, along with their shared interests on distant coasts, exemplifies how regional maritime dynamics interacted with social and political worlds above the high-water mark.

**AUTHOR BIO:** Jennifer L. Gaynor is an assistant professor of history at the University at Buffalo, State University of New York.



## Indonesia 101

In addition to its regular feature essays and book reviews, this issue of *Indonesia* also contains memorials to Benedict R. O'G. Anderson (1936–2015) from his longtime colleagues Joshua Barker, Tamara Loos, Ruth McVey, Vicente L. Rafael, and James T. Siegel.



## PRICELESS PAMPHLETS: The John Echols Collection and its Value to Historians of Vietnam

The first time I came to Cornell University back in 2009 to participate in the SEAP graduate student conference, I had ordered two carts full of books, which awaited me at the Olin circulation desk. Going to Cornell was not just about meeting other graduate students and enjoying good food, it was also a unique chance to read all the books I could not get at the Université du Québec à Montréal. I went through those two carts in record time, although I still craved more information when I departed two days later.

Coming back to Cornell, this time for two years as a visiting fellow, I could finally explore the Southeast Asia Collection in greater depth. Like everyone else new to Kroch Library, I went through the basics. I figured out the difference between Oversize + and Oversize ++, and I got lost while searching for the mezzanine. Coming from a much smaller university in Montreal,

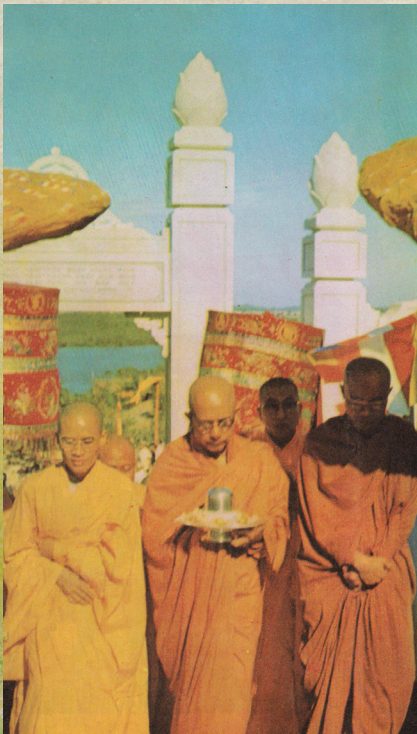
I was determined to make the most of the Cornell Library System. And so, I browsed through the Asia microfilms, viewed the rare manuscript collection, made predictions on how fast Borrow Direct items would arrive, and even tested the Interlibrary Loan service by requesting an enigmatic reference on religion in the army of the Republic of Vietnam. For the last three months, every time I left the Echols Collection, it was with a big smile on my face and two bags full of books.

However, what made the greatest difference in my research were not only the amazing services offered by the library. I also had access to unique books and periodicals that could not be accessed anywhere else in the world. Most of the published sources I need for my research on the Republic of Vietnam from 1954 to 1975 should be in Vietnam. Yet access to those documents remains difficult. The existing collections have

been damaged by war and postwar upheavals. This is particularly true for publications of wartime South Vietnam, as today's socialist republic has little incentive to preserve documents proposing narratives opposite to the Communist national hagiography, the content of which is sometimes critical of that party.

Cornell's Southeast Asia Collection is by no means complete. However, it does not discriminate between Communist and anti-Communist documents, and it includes an impressive amount of publications from that period. In the past, the library consistently purchased a wide array of documents, ranging from official pamphlets and associations' newsletters to self-published material of little or no commercial value. A few decades later, those same documents, then insignificant, have become an invaluable source of analysis for historians like me.

*Left: Ceylonese monk Narada Mada Thera leads the ceremony. Right: As Buddhist flags float in the sky, Mahayana and Theravada Buddhists attend the inauguration ceremony.*







by Phi Vân Nguyen, SEAP visiting fellow

One pamphlet on the inauguration of a Buddhist monument in March 1963 is a good example of the collection's uniqueness. Those forty-four pages describe the inauguration ceremony of the Thích Ca Phật Đài (Monument to Buddha), which is composed of a path going through a garden, a stupa, and a statute of Buddha sitting on a lotus bloom raised on the hills of Vũng Tàu. While an in-depth history of this monument would require more documents, this little pamphlet already packs a significant amount of information.

First, this little booklet gives a unique insight into the Buddhist movement before the May 1963 crisis, which contributed to the fall of the Republic of Vietnam. Historians handle all documents on Buddhism published after the fall of Ngo Dinh Diem with great precaution because of its potential bias. From then on, the number of Buddhist publications exploded as Buddhists believed they had been key protagonists of the November 1st Revolution overthrowing Ngo Dinh Diem. Yet, as happens with any other revolution, their retrospective accounts offer a glorifying narrative leading to the crisis and do not reflect the contingent, and sometimes contradictory, nature of the events preceding the overthrow of the republic. To that extent alone, this document predating the May 1963 crisis, along with many others from the Southeast Asia Collection, is extremely valuable.

Additionally, the pictures included in the pamphlet highlight important developments of the Buddhist movement. The photographs show prominent figures of both Theravada and

Mahayana Buddhism, monks and laymen, as well as elders and Buddhist boy scouts involved in the ceremony. In doing so, they expertly illustrate two objectives that Vietnamese Buddhism had been pursuing for decades. For example, the presence of both Mahayana and Theravada monks and laymen shows the joint effort in unifying Buddhist sects in southern Vietnam. Moreover, the participation of Ceylonese monk Narada Maha Thera, an influential Buddhist scholar, as the acting chair of the inauguration ceremony also exposes the growing ties between Vietnamese and Ceylonese Buddhism. The statute itself, which is perhaps the first large-scale statute of a Buddha wearing a Ceylonese-style Buddhist robe in Vietnam, celebrates this unique connection that emerged from the Buddhist revival.

This little pamphlet is just one isolated example of how helpful and unique the Cornell Southeast Asia Collection is to historians. From the hundreds of books I had the chance to look at for the last couple of months, more than sixty publications like this pamphlet were not available in any other university library in North America, according to my searches through WorldCat. Thus, I feel privileged to enjoy Cornell's Borrow Direct partnership with other university libraries and excellent Interlibrary Loan services. But what makes the Echols Collection at Cornell stand apart, and figure among one of the finest libraries on Southeast Asia in the world, is its steady purchase of official and unofficial, famous and obscure, popular and unpopular publications from decades ago—and hopefully, for many decades to come. 🙏

*The monument to Buddha remains an important religious site in Vũng Tàu to this day (source Wikipedia Commons).*







by Jenna Bittenbender, former graduate assistant for educational outreach, now SEAP new initiatives coordinator



# SEAP Outreach Announces Newly Digitized Lending Library







When I first walked into the storage rooms containing lending library materials, I felt overwhelmed by the sheer volume of items.

There were hundreds upon hundreds of books and visual materials at the Kahin Center alone and many more in the basement of Uris Hall. Most extraordinary of all of these resources were the culture kits and the objects within them. As I began cataloging the items, from Indonesian shadow puppets to fabrics from Burma, item by item, I learned about the cultures from which they came. As an archaeologist, learning through tactile experiences comes naturally. I am a proponent of teaching with objects.

In addition to cataloging the myriad resources, I collaborated with local educators and brainstormed ways to curate the materials for their needs. Through workshops and discussions, I discovered more about their teaching experiences, pedagogies, and curric-

ular goals. From these interactions, a resounding pattern emerged: local educators want to train students to think in a more global or cross-cultural way with the hope of broadening their conceptual understandings. In addition, I found that educators want to weave diverse perspectives and incorporate more information on various world regions into their curricula but do not know where to find the appropriate materials to supplement required texts. From discussions with local educators, I realized how much they value global learning and how SEAP outreach could facilitate their goals to internationalize curricula with the lending library.

With great success the SEAP outreach team has digitized all of the area studies program resources and made them available online through Libib.

com. From this website, educators can browse hundreds of materials and check out items that best suit their needs. We currently have the capability to ship smaller items such as books, movies, and music CDs from the Southeast Asia collection. At this time, the culture kits may be checked out but must be picked up in person. The best part about this initiative is that the resources are free. Our goal is to make sure that educators have access to the relevant and appropriate materials they need to teach about world regions in a nuanced and critical way. Within this library we have materials suitable for all age groups. We look forward to the continued growth of our library and to having an even greater impact on our community.

The lending library is an online educational outreach resource housed in Libib.com, which provides images, descriptive text, and searchable keywords to aid the teacher-user in finding the materials they need. The library encompasses all of the regional programs within the Mario Einaudi Center for International Studies, including the Southeast Asia Program. This online resource contains books, movies, music, and culture kits—all of which are intended to promote the internationalization of course curriculums. The lending library consists of over one thousand educational books and more than fifty uniquely designed culture kits. These resources were developed to engage both educators and students in creating a deeper understanding of foreign cultures and languages. The resources within the lending library were prepared by experts at Cornell University and are geared for use by K-12 and community college educators.

To view the lending library visit [outreach.libib.com](http://outreach.libib.com) and email [outreach@einaudi.cornell.edu](mailto:outreach@einaudi.cornell.edu) if you would like to become a patron and start checking out materials. For more information on the lending library policy and checkout process visit: <https://seap.einaudi.cornell.edu/lending-library>.



# ANNOUNCEMENTS ON CAMPUS AND BEYOND



## SEAP Graduate Student Committee Co-Chairs

The 2016-2017 co-chairs are Van Tran (left) and Fauzul Rizal Sutikno (right). They will run the SEAP graduate conference in the spring, social events for the SEAP community, and the weekly Ronald and Janette Gatty Lecture Series, named in honor of SEAP alumni Ronald Gatty and Janette Gatty, and their substantial contribution to SEAP programming, especially activities led by graduate students.

**FOR THE FULL LISTING of the fall 2016 weekly Gatty lectures, visit:**  
<https://seap.einaudi.cornell.edu/>.

## Celebrating the 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday of SEAP Emeritus Professor Stanley J. O'Connor



Family, colleagues, former students, and friends gathered to celebrate the 90<sup>th</sup> birthday of SEAP Professor Emeritus Stanley J. O'Connor (departments of history of art and Asian studies) on June 18, 2016 at the Kahin Center. Guests present shared memories, a poem, and a song to commemorate the momentous occasion with many others unable to be present (Astri Wright in Norway and Apinan Poshyananda in the Czech Republic), who shared written memories.

Nora Taylor '97 (professor, art history, School of the Art Institute of Chicago) presented a collaborative performance with her daughter, Mana. In 1992, when Nora embarked on her fieldwork for her doctoral dissertation, she decided to travel to Kuching, Borneo to follow in Stanley O'Connor's footsteps. She had never shown Stan her slides. When she defended her doctoral dissertation in December 1996 under Stan's guidance, she was expecting Mana. For Stan's 90th birthday, Nora wanted Mana to be a part of her tribute to Stan, therefore the two of them performed a duet of Stan's poem "Water Village Borneo" to

music and sang it while Nora projected the slides that she had taken of the Sarawak River, the Dayak people, the Niah caves, and the Sarawak Museum in Kuching, Malaysia.

Caverlee S. Cary '94 (program director, Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, Berkeley) quoted the Lotus Sutra (Sadāparibhūta Bodhisattva, No. 20), which says to treat all beings with respect, as they will someday become Buddhas. Caverlee likened this to Professor O'Connor treating his students (and others from all walks of life) with kindness and respect. She then presented him with a calligraphy of the quotation done by a Japanese master calligrapher:

Kamala Tiyanich '93 (independent scholar) shared her memories of Stan: "I was delighted when Ajan Stan agreed to read and comment on my manuscript for *The Buddha in the Jungle*. He understood what I was trying to convey, and his comments became the basis for his foreword to the book. Ajan Stan's recommendation that courses on Southeast Asia should teach my book thus introduced it to a wider audience.





### Kahin Center Update

Jenna Bittenbender (left) and Alexandra Dalferro (right) have graciously accepted the split-responsibility of fall 2016 Kahin Center building manager. Please direct questions and requests to them at [kahinbuildingmnger@einaudi.cornell.edu](mailto:kahinbuildingmnger@einaudi.cornell.edu).

## SEAP WELCOMES NEW STAFF

**Jenna Bittenbender** (shown to left) has been appointed as the new initiatives coordinator. She recently graduated with an MA in Archaeology from the Cornell Institute of Archaeology and Material Studies. Her studies focused on archaeological science and Eastern Mediterranean studies. Jenna has spent the last four summers working on archaeological excavations abroad. She is deeply committed to the preservation of cultural heritage and to higher education. She brings an enthusiasm for learning and public engagement to her new role with SEAP.

**Anna Callahan** has been appointed as the new graduate assistant for outreach. She is a first year graduate student in Cornell's City and Regional Planning Program. She is interested in the intersections of international development, historic preservation, and tourism. As an undergraduate at Carleton College in Northfield, MN, she studied Japanese and South Asian History and has traveled to Japan and to India. She'll be managing SEAP's (and the Cornell Mario Einaudi Center's) lending library and culture kits.



I will always be grateful for his encouragement and support."

SEAP faculty, Thak Chaloemtiarana '74 (graduate school, Southeast Asian and Thai Studies) read a tribute written by his daughter, Khwan Chaloemtiarana, '96. Khwan applauded Stan for enriching her life and the lives of countless students he has encouraged over the years. Thak's son, Thwen Chaloemtiarana '90, belonged to the same fraternity, Alpha Delta Phi, as Stan and the late SEAP Professor Emeritus Lauriston

Sharp (anthropology, Asian studies). Thwen and his fraternity brothers made a contribution to the Echol's Collection in Stan's name.

While director of the Southeast Asia Program from 1979-1984, Stan launched the first SEAP bulletin. At the birthday party, Professor Emeritus Randy Barker (Agricultural Economics and Asian Studies) presented Stan with a special edition copy of the cover of the first bulletin (1982) revised with Stan's image on it. The



image used was the same image that appeared in that issue with the 'remarks from the director.' Stan's children and grandchildren loved the special image and planned to have it framed.

When the first SEAP Bulletin debuted in 1982, Stan wrote in his letter: "whether you are a recent graduate or a longtime friend of the Southeast Asia Program, you will find that the Program is both much the same as you remember it and also a changing and varied academic venture." Having taught at Cornell since 1964, Stan has seen many changes over the years. But his former students who returned to be a part of the celebration noted that he hasn't aged a day since. Happy 90<sup>th</sup> birthday, Stan!







## Cultures of Censorship in Thailand



by Rebecca Townsend, Ph.D. candidate, history

In April 2016, Professor Tamara Loos and I hosted the workshop *Cultures of Censorship: Censorship and Secrets in Thailand* with the support of Cornell's Southeast Asia Program and the Polson Institute for Global Development. When we first discussed organizing a workshop on censorship in Thailand, our primary aim was to approach the topic as one that was pervasive in the lives of those living and working in Thailand, beyond institutional regulation. Particularly in the aftermath of the two military coups in September 2006 and May 2014 against democratically elected governments, censorship became increasingly enforced and perpetrated by diverse actors in varied formats in the real and digital worlds. At the same time that censorship and self-censorship is enforced and encouraged by the state, it is also the result of actions and pressure by strangers, friends, and colleagues. While censorship via the lèse-majesté laws protecting the King, Queen, and Crown Prince is now critical to regulating the public and private lives of Thais and foreigners in Thailand, censorship also impacts all spheres of cultural and intellectual engagement. How many people living and working in Thailand have thought twice before sending a tweet or determining which language is appropriate in an article? Recent cases, such as theaters voluntarily declining to screen

*The Hunger Games* films (after the franchise's imagery was adopted by activists) and protests against tweets sent by the British ambassador to Thailand, reveal the impact of censorship on Thailand's international relations and global image.

We also wanted the workshop to be highly interactive, engaging, and intimate. In this respect, Cornell's Southeast Asia Program and the space at the Kahin Center offered a unique opportunity. SEAP's support for the workshop was not only critical in making the event possible in the first place, but also fostered a positive and productive atmosphere. We were fortunate to welcome two outside speakers, independent scholar David Streckfuss and Thaweepon Kummetha, an editor with the independent web news outlet *Prachatai English*. Both David and Thaweepon have produced important contributions to public intellectual and critical work on Thailand. They are also both working from within the country while also engaging with outside networks. From within Cornell, I spoke on the historical and social development of censorship, film, and sexuality. Professors Tamara Loos, Thak Chaloemtiarana, and Arnika Fuhrmann volunteered their expertise on Thailand to serve as discussants for our papers. Although Arnika was unable to attend, Cornell PhD graduate and SEAP alum

Professor Lawrence Chua acted as her substitute. The discussants as well as members of the audience offered unique insights and perspectives on the dynamics of censorship in academic work on Thailand. Many were able to bring their own experiences working and living in Thailand to bring home the personal and extensive nature of contemporary censorship.

The discussions served as an important reminder of the rich expertise on Thailand offered by Cornell. They also illuminated the important reason that the climate of censorship and self-censorship in Thailand is so critical because of the ways in which it builds and informs even seemingly unimportant facets of life. Private conversations in taxi cabs, red bowls, and private Facebook messages have all recently been subject to censorship and regulation. Censorship is not simply institutional regulation or a repressive tool of the state. Instead, it is a productive social, cultural, and political force. In one case, Thaweepon discussed the active role of Facebook users in enforcing the censorship regime. The internet in Thailand is not always a democratic force as has sometimes been argued regarding the role of the internet in political development. Instead, Facebook and other social media platforms are at once a place for activists and others to express democratic opinions,



but also one where Royalist or pro-military users can seek out anyone who deviates from the official line. One of the most extreme examples of this cyberbullying is the Social Sanction (SS) group. SS claimed to be a “private lese majeste prosecutor,” and spread damaging speech and photographs about people perceived as being against the monarchy. Since these actions are institutionally enforced through recent prosecutions of anti-government activists’ activities on Facebook, a climate of fear now informs how people living and working in Thailand use the social media site. David Streckfuss found that many journalists and academics have begun to self-censor. They do so not out of political apathy but from fear that opportunities may be withheld, colleagues offended, or their personal relationships put at risk. The threat of a prison sentence is an important but by no means the only consequence of free speech. The current climate of fear and insecurity is the result of both institutional and societal censorship regimes.

Despite such oppression, people do employ strategies to evade regulation. Indeed, it appears that the English language (as opposed to Thai) can often (but not always) shield a speaker from retaliation or targeting. David pointed out that social media has power, as with the case of *Khao Sot* journalist Pravit Rojanaphruk, whose more than 30,000 Twitter followers mean that any action taken by the state will be highly visible. In another case, a subject used humor or sarcasm to express herself. Criticism also operates through hints and implications. Prominent filmmaker Apichatpong Weerasethakul’s most recent film *Cemetery of Splendor* offers an important example. The film is filled with political messages, but perhaps only to those who are already equipped to understand them. And certainly there are individuals who are willing to take a more direct approach to their criticism, such as the now in-exile academic Pavin Chachavalongpong. These voices give strength to an equally productive, democratic and critical understanding of society and politics in Thailand. Here at Cornell, we hope that the workshop shed light on how censorship figures into our own positionalities and impacts the work that we do as scholars.

## NEW COURSES...

3 credits  
ARTH 3856  
**ARTH 3856: Performing Angkor: Dance, Silk, and Stone**  
With Prof. Kaja McGowan

WINTER 2017  
**Cornell in Cambodia**

Financial support may be available.  
cu-in-cambodia@cornell.edu | cuseap.wix.com/

**SEAP** Cornell Southeast Asia Program

**CLIMATE CHANGE**  
AWARENESS AND SERVICE LEARNING IN  
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ALS 3601/ASIAN 3361 (spring)  
Open to all majors | Limited to 12 students

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WINTER 17 2 weeks  
SPRING 17 7 weeks  
**TRIP TO VIETNAM**

Online application and interview with instructors:  
Thúy Tranviet and Mike Hoffmann  
tinyurl.com/CornellinVN | CornellinVietnam@cornell.edu

**SEAP** Cornell University Southeast Asia Program

### First-Year Writing Seminar Food on Film: Asia ASIAN 1108

Spring. 3 credits. Letter grades only.

A. Fuhrmann

This course studies the politics and aesthetics of food production and presentation, nourishment, and consumption across a variety of Asian screen cultures and political-economic contexts. We will “consume” classics of the food film such as *Eat, Drink, Man, Woman*, analyze the Mokbang phenomenon of commercial on-screen eating as well as consider documentaries about the food industries. What has cooking, eating, consuming, nourishing, mass-producing, or refusing food come to mean in the globalized, neoliberal economies and mobile societies of South, Southeast, and East Asia?



### The City: Asia ASIAN 6623

(crosslisted) FGSS 6504

Spring. 4 credits.

Co-meets with ASIAN 4423/FGSS 4504/  
PMA 4504. A. Fuhrmann

This course uses the lens of temporality to track transformations in notions of urban personhood and collective life engendered by recent trans-Asia economic shifts. We will develop tools that help unpack the spatial and cultural forms of density and the layered histories that define the contemporary urban fabric of cities such as Hanoi, Bangkok, Shanghai, and Hong Kong. The course combines the investigation of the cinemas and literatures of the region with the study of recent writing on cities from Asian studies, film studies, queer theory, urban studies, political theory, religious studies, cultural geography, literary





# UPCOMING EVENTS

FOR THE FULL LISTING of the fall 2016 weekly Gatty lectures, visit: <https://seap.einaudi.cornell.edu/>.



## OCTOBER 10–11

Cornell will be hosting a Burmese Language Pedagogy Workshop. In preparation, SEAP is currently putting together surveys targeting Burmese language students and instructors. If you are interested in participating in such a survey, please email [burmesepedagogy2016@gmail.com](mailto:burmesepedagogy2016@gmail.com) with the subject line "request to participate teacher" or "request to participate student."



## OCTOBER 28–29

The Northeast Conference on Indonesia has been a collaborative effort of Cornell and Yale since 2008. It is a forum where junior and senior Indonesianists from diverse academic fields share their intellectual findings and build networks. The forum also promotes Indonesian as an academic language among the Indonesianists. The fifteenth conference, held at the Kahin Center, will be dedicated to the memory of Dr. Benedict Anderson. Dr. Mary Steedly (Harvard) will be the keynote speaker.

## NOVEMBER 5 (pictured left)

Internationalization and Inclusion: Refugees in Community Colleges: This conference seeks to address refugee education at community colleges and explore the tapped and untapped potential for internationalizing and enriching the community college experience for all students. Conference participants will learn from community colleges that have successfully engaged past generations of refugee students and integrated their culture, history, and communities into the educational landscape of their campus.

## NOVEMBER 17

Einaudi Center's Foreign Policy Distinguished Speaker Series—Derek Mitchell, Ambassador to Burma.

## DECEMBER 1

Cornell Gamelan Ensemble; Christopher J. Miller, director. A program of traditional Javanese music and dance, featuring guest dancer Danang Pamungkas. [7:30 pm Barnes Hall]





## 2016 Lauriston Sharp Prize

We are pleased to award the 2016 Lauriston Sharp Prize to Amanda Flaim for her dissertation, "No Land's Man: Sovereignty, Legal Status, and the Production of Statelessness among Highlanders in Northern Thailand." Named in honor of the founder of SEAP, Lauriston Sharp (1907–93), the prize is awarded each year to the graduate student who has contributed most outstandingly to both scholarship and the community life of the Southeast Asia Program.

While she was in the field as a graduate student, Flaim's aptitude for survey design led UNESCO Thailand to appoint her as their lead research consultant on statelessness. In this position, she designed and coordinated the largest survey to date of highland ethnic minorities in Thailand, which included 70,000 stateless and formerly stateless people. The true strength of Flaim's study derives not only from this exceptional volume of statistical data, but from the way in which both her analysis and the survey itself were informed by multi-sited ethnographic research and engagement with multiple disciplinary methodologies and perspectives. With this approach, Flaim convincingly argues that statelessness in Thailand, far from merely a technical problem of law, is produced and reproduced through the very bureaucratic and legal infrastructures designed, paradoxically, to eradicate it. Flaim's study demonstrates the effectiveness of mixed-methods research, contributes significantly to the theory of statelessness, and has broad implications for policy in Thailand and beyond.

Amanda was deeply committed to SEAP while she was at Cornell. She contributed to the seminar series, participated in graduate student conferences, and guest-lectured in several faculty members' courses. Amanda was also the graduate committee co-chair in 2007–08 with Chika Watanabe, and she helped carry out the teacher training held by SEAP in 2007, providing information to area teachers about the politics and issues facing refugee children from Burma who were entering local schools. She is currently a postdoctoral associate at Duke University's Social Science Research Institute and a visiting lecturer at the Sanford School of Public Policy.

# AWARDS

## Cornell University Southeast Asia DOCTORAL Degrees

January 15, 2015

**Yulianto Salahuddin Mohsin**

Science and Technology Studies

Ronald Kline

"Archipelagic Networks of Power: Village Electrification, Politics, Ideology, and Dual National Identity in Indonesia (1966–98)"

August 17, 2015

**Wah Guan Lim**

Asian Literature, Religion, and Culture

Edward M. Gunn

"Performing 'Chinese-ness': Articulating Identities-of-Becoming in the Works of Four Sinophone Theatre Director-Playwrights in the 1980s"

FEBRUARY 1, 2016

**Diego Fossati**

Government

Thomas Pepinsky

"Elections, Parties, and Policy: The Multilevel Politics of Free Healthcare in Indonesia"

**Edmund Joo Vin Oh**

Development Sociology

Charles C. Geisler

"Resource Governance as Depoliticized Development: The Rise of Fisheries Co-management in Vietnam"

MAY 29, 2016

**Sneha Kumar**

Development Sociology

Linda B. Williams

"The Causes of Indonesia's Late Fertility Transition Stall"

## Cornell University Southeast Asia MASTER'S Degrees

FEBRUARY 1, 2016

**Sebastian Carl Dettman**

Government

Thomas Pepinsky

**Ting Hui Lau**

Anthropology

Magnus Fiskesjö

**Matthew Joseph Minarchek**

History

Eric Tagliacozzo

**Emily Gayong Setton**

Anthropology

Annelise Riles

**Emiko Stock**

Anthropology

Lucinda E.G. Ramberg

MAY 29, 2016

**Chantal Elizabeth Croteau**

Asian Studies

Anne M. Blackburn

"Competing Modes of Remembrance: Tsunami Commemoration in Takuapa, Thailand"

**Mariangela Jordan**

Anthropology

Magnus Fiskesjö

**Megan Pulver**

City and Regional Planning

Michael K. Manville

**Thet Hein Tun**

City and Regional Planning

Michael K. Manville



**Warren B. Bailey**, professor,  
finance and Asian studies

**Randolph Barker**, professor  
emeritus, agricultural economics  
and Asian studies

**Victoria Beard**, associate  
professor, city and regional  
planning (on leave 2015–17)

**Anne Blackburn**, professor, South  
Asia and Buddhist studies

**Thak Chaloemtiarana**, professor  
of the Graduate School

**Abigail Cohn**, professor,  
linguistics and Asian studies  
(on leave fall 2016)

**Magnus Fiskesjö**, associate  
professor, anthropology

**Chiara Formichi**, assistant  
professor, Asian studies (on leave  
spring and fall 2017)

**Arnika Fuhrmann**, assistant  
professor, Asian studies (on leave  
fall 2016)

**Greg Green**, curator, Echols  
Collection on Southeast Asia

**Martin F. Hatch**, professor  
emeritus, music and Asian studies

**Ngampit Jagacinski**, senior  
language lecturer, Thai

**Yu Yu Khaing**, language lecturer,  
Burmese

**Sarosh Kuruvilla**, professor,  
industrial and labor relations and  
Asian studies

**Tamara Lynn Loos**, associate  
professor, history and Asian  
studies

**Andrew Mertha**, professor,  
government (on leave fall 2016)

**Kaja M. McGowan**, associate  
professor, art history, archaeology,  
and Asian studies; and director of  
the Southeast Asia Program

**Christopher J. Miller**, senior  
lecturer, music

**Stanley J. O'Connor**, professor  
emeritus, art history and Asian  
studies

**Jolanda Pandin**, senior language  
lecturer, Indonesian

**Thomas Pepinsky**, associate  
professor, government

**Hannah Phan**, senior language  
lecturer, Khmer

**Maria Theresa Savella**, senior  
language lecturer, Tagalog

**James T. Siegel**, professor  
emeritus, anthropology and Asian  
studies

**Eric Tagliacozzo**, professor,  
history and Asian studies

**Keith W. Taylor**, professor,  
Vietnamese cultural studies and  
Asian studies (on leave spring  
2017)

**Erik Thorbecke**, H.E. Babcock  
Professor Emeritus, economics  
and food economics

**Thúy Tranviet**, senior language  
lecturer, Vietnamese

**Marina Welker**, associate  
professor, anthropology

**Andrew Willford**, professor,  
anthropology and Asian studies

**Lindy Williams**, professor,  
development sociology

**John Whitman**, professor,  
linguistics

**John U. Wolff**, professor  
emeritus, linguistics and Asian  
studies



## Faculty Associate in Research

Eve Zucker's research focuses on the aftermath of mass violence in Cambodia through the lenses of social memory, morality, the imagination, trust, and everyday practices. She received her PhD in anthropology from the London School of Economics (LSE) and her MA in cultural anthropology from the University of Wisconsin at Madison. She has conducted extensive research in Cambodia (2001–03, 2010) on the topics of memory, morality, and recovery from war and genocide. Her book, *Forest of Struggle: Moralities of Remembrance in Upland Cambodia*, published by University of Hawaii Press in 2013, tracks the recovery of a village community in Cambodia's southwest, a site that was a Khmer Rouge base and battleground for nearly thirty years. She is currently a visiting scholar at the Center for the Study of Genocide and

Human Rights at Rutgers University, where she is working on projects concerning the role of imagination, empathy, and resilience in the recovery from, and in the prevention of, mass violence. A particular focus for her is the role and impacts of the rescuer in healing the imaginations and worldviews of victim survivors and others. Dr. Zucker has taught at several colleges and universities in the United States and abroad, held visiting scholarships at the University of California, San Diego, and the LSE, and is a former researcher for the Cambodian Genocide Program.



# NEW JOHNSON MUSEUM ACQUISITIONS

## TEXTILES FROM LAOS IN THE JOHNSON MUSEUM

The Johnson Museum acquired its first examples of Tai textiles from Laos in 2008, and the museum's holdings were increased significantly in 2015 with a donation from Robert L. and Carol Kim Retka. The Retkas, who formed their collection while living in Bangkok and traveling in Laos for the U.S. State Department, gave approximately 45 Lao textiles, including Lao-Tai skirts, shoulder cloths, head wrappings, and household cloths; Hmong collars, garment panels, and a refugee story quilt; and tube skirts and blankets from Attapeu Province. Illustrated here are select examples that show the range of techniques employed, from ikat and supplementary weft weaving to applique and embroidery. The museum's collection of Lao and other Southeast Asian textiles can be searched at [museum.cornell.edu](http://museum.cornell.edu).



- a** Laos, Lao-Tai people  
**Shaman's healing shawl** (*paa sabaai*), ca. 1920–50  
Silk and cotton, supplementary weft woven  
114 x 43 cm  
Gift of Robert L. and Carol Kim Retka

- b** Laos, Hmong people  
**Refugee Story Quilt**, ca. 1989  
Cotton and polyester, embroidered  
170 x 259 cm  
Gift of Robert L. and Carol Kim Retka

- c** Laos, Lao-Tai people  
**Woman's banded ikat tube skirt** (*sin mii taa*), ca. 1920–50  
Cotton, weft ikat, supplementary weft woven  
75 x 69 cm  
Gift of Robert L. and Carol Kim Retka

- d** Laos, Tai Daeng  
**Textile for traveling, or baby-covering**, ca. 1920–50  
Handspun silk with supplemental weft patterning and lac-red dye  
124.5 x 58.4 cm  
Gift of the Estate of Louise Taraldson Woods and other donors, by exchange

- e** Laos, Tai Daeng or Tai Lue  
**Textile for hanging** (*phaa lai*) with **serpentine pii nyak design**, ca. 1920–50  
Handspun cotton and silk with cotton continuous supplemental weft patterning and indigo dye  
175.3 x 72.4 cm  
Gift of the Estate of Louise Taraldson Woods and other donors, by exchange

- f** Laos, Attapeu Province  
**Woman's tube skirt**, ca. 1920–50  
Cotton, supplementary weft woven  
79.5 x 64 cm  
Gift of Robert L. and Carol Kim Retka







## **SOUTHEAST ASIA PROGRAM**

<http://seap.einaudi.cornell.edu/>

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Published by the Southeast Asia Program  
Cornell University, 180 Uris Hall, Ithaca, NY 14853-7601

Editor: Brenna Fitzgerald  
Design: Westhill Graphics

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